

The Book of the Poe Centenary



University of Virginia



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The BOOK *of the* POE CENTENARY

A Record of the Exercises at the Uni-
versity of Virginia January 16-19,
1909, in Commemoration of the
One Hundredth Birthday
of Edgar Allan Poe

EDITED BY

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1909

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I

EDGAR ALLAN POE

THE University of Virginia has nothing with which to reproach herself in her treatment of Edgar Allan Poe. Through ill report and good he was followed with her maternal solicitude and misgivings, but never with her reproof or wrath. In his college days she may have been too lenient, but in the days of his fame she is not constrained by any hobgoblin of consistency to withhold her praise. She has, therefore, had peculiar pride in witnessing his universal acclaim as a man of genius and as a singularly forceful agency in compelling international recognition of our American literature. Her anxiety is no longer lest he be not recognized at his real worth, but lest, in the ardor of revived enthusiasm, his real merit, however high, be overrated and his rightful place, so tardily won, jeopardized by claims too sweeping and superlative.

The celebration of the Poe centenary at the University of Virginia has served, however, as a corrective: first, of the persistent misstatements of his earlier biographers, and then of the unsettled or adverse judgment of his literary rank.

Edgar Allan Poe entered the University on the fourteenth of February, 1826, and did not leave until the twentieth of December. By the way, the many errors and uncertainties as to Poe's stay at the University are due to a misunderstanding of the period covered by the session of 1826. It began on the first of February and continued without break or holiday to the fifteenth of December, so that instead of leaving during the session, as has been asserted in various forms of ignorance or malignity, he was in the University from two weeks after the session opened until five days after the session closed. Nor was he disciplined by suspension, expulsion, personal reprimand, or in any other way during that long session. He did fall once under suspicion of misconduct, but in that particular case was innocent.

His career was not entirely calm and placid

in that stormy session, but notwithstanding alleged irregularities he was commended for Italian translation, reported among the "passed" in Latin and French, and, in addition, was known to the librarian as a free reader of good books, to his fellow-students as a gifted author of undergraduate tales never published, and probably of poems afterwards published in the volume of 1827. Among those who applauded his achievements, yet deplored the errancies of his later life, were his brother alumni; and in that small company of sincere mourners who followed his storm-tossed and wrecked body to its humble grave were representatives of his *alma mater*.

When the semi-centennial of his death came, the University of Virginia unveiled, with services so significant as to attract the attention of the cultivated world, the Zolnay bust of Poe, the most striking and satisfactory artistic representation of the poet extant.* Through this successful and significant celebration the University of Virginia's connection

*There were then but two monuments to Poe: his tombstone in Baltimore and the Actors' Monument in the Metropolitan Museum of New York.

with Poe became so widely known that as the centennial of his birth approached, it was taken for granted by the foreign and domestic press that the supreme appreciation of this noted event would be shown at this University. That these high expectations might not be disappointed, the President of the University of Virginia appointed a committee to provide for some adequate recognition of the centenary. The committee, consisting of Charles W. Kent, James A. Harrison, and William H. Faulkner, with the hearty support of the Faculty, students, community, and especially the President, arranged the programme set forth in this volume officially sanctioned.

In this book no record can be made of the brilliancy or enthusiasm of the audiences, no representation of the spectacular features of the entertainment, but the substantial contributions to Poe criticism and the distinct acknowledgement of Poe's far-sweeping fame are here presented to the public with grateful thanks to all who by participation or presence did honor to Poe's memory, and with a solemn sense of chastened but lasting joy that our great alumnus has at last come so fully to his own.

II

IN THE JEFFERSON SOCIETY

THE Jefferson Literary Society was established in the early months of the session of 1825, and Poe became a member in 1826.

The first public event of the centenary was a celebration by this Society on the evening of the 16th. Interest in the occasion and the special programme drew many to the Jefferson Hall in spite of the prevailing severe snow storm. The programme, arranged by students to do honor to their famous predecessor, expressed well the attitude of the student body to him. The committee on programme was Paul Micou, chairman; L. M. Robinette, O. R. Easley, G. F. Zimmer, and A. B. Hutzler.

Mr. Paul Micou presided and welcomed the audience, promising that none of the speakers would attempt elaborate criticism of the poet's life and works. The place of oratorical tributes and dramatic recital of poems would be

taken by simple descriptions of Poe's life at the University, the student activities in his day and the founding of the Society.

Mr. H. H. Thurlow, of New York, gave the necessary setting for the programme in a short sketch of the poet's life, not omitting the pathetic story of his varying fortunes in the several cities in which he sojourned.

The Washington Literary Society had been invited to take part in the programme, and Mr. DeRoy R. Fonville, of North Carolina, was present as its delegate. Mr. Fonville, whose theme was "The Pathos in the Lives of Our Southern Poets," pictured the pitiful struggles that had so large a share in the lives of Lanier, Hayne and Timrod, reaching in Poe's life the climax of his story. The courage and dignity of these gifted men in the midst of the sore perplexities of their artistic lives received sympathetic treatment.

The natural pride of the Jefferson Society in having had Poe as a member suggested the theme for Mr. W. P. Powell, of Virginia—"Poe and the Jefferson Literary Society." Mr. Powell told his audience that the life of the Jefferson Society has been almost co-equal with

that of the University, if we date the institution from the beginning of its first session, and that the poet was an active member, and, for at least one meeting, temporary secretary. He seems to have addressed the Society only once, and then his theme was "Heat and Cold." Mr. Powell drew some legitimate inferences as to Poe's sociability from the fact of his membership in the "Jeff."

Many interesting anecdotes and curious facts about the poet's University year were told by Mr. A. B. Hutzler, of Virginia. In the course of his address on "Poe at the University of Virginia," he pointed out that despite the lawlessness of that session Edgar Poe appeared on the minute-book of the faculty but once, and that in that case it was merely to give testimony in an affair about which he proved to be ignorant. His evident literary and artistic gifts were shown even then by his story-telling to friends gathered at the fireside in No. 13, and the decoration of his dormitory with crayon copies of scenes that had caught his fancy. In a few words he rehearsed the facts which have convinced investigators that No. 13 West Range is the room that Poe occupied

after leaving West Lawn, where he was first domiciled as a student.

Mr. J. Y. McDonald, of West Virginia, followed with an address full of humorous stories of "Student Life at the University in 1826," the year of Poe's residence. He kept his audience amused with story after story taken from faculty minute-books of the almost daily trials for violating the strict rules prescribing apparel, food, amusements, and conduct of the students. It was hard for the students in his audience to realize, as ever existing at the University, such conditions as those record-books and the statutes of the time record with grave formality. One fact of interest pointed out by Mr. McDonald was the close personal touch that Mr. Jefferson maintained with the students of his University. The disorders of 1826, due to boyish revolt against the prevailing conditions, were graphically described.

Not less entertaining or full of quaint details was the address of Mr. A. G. Gilmer, of Virginia, on "How the Faculty Fared in 1826." That their lines had not fallen to them in places entirely pleasant was very evident, for

something like twenty-five expulsions from a student body of five times that number pointed to a great deal of disorder and probably to much that was radically wrong with the system under which student self-government was first attempted. Mr. Jefferson planned a student tribunal to try all cases of misconduct, but no student would serve on that court and the faculty was forced to another method. Immediate success was not achieved, but ultimately there came about a mutual respect and forbearance, which solved the hard problem of discipline for all time. The attempt to procure the entire faculty (with a single exception) from abroad was discussed at some length, and the characteristics of the importations were well described.

Mr. S. M. Cleveland, of Virginia, closed the exercises by an interesting analysis of the poems which he believed Poe had written while at the University. These were "Tamerlane," "Dreams," "Visit of the Dead," "Evening Star," "Imitation," "In Youth I Have Known One," "A Wandering Being from My Birth," "The Happiest Day," and "The Lake." The discussion as to whether these poems were

written at the University was ingenious and interesting, if not convincing. Their general atmosphere and message were discussed with rare insight and critical interpretation. Mr. Cleveland drew a comparison between "Tamerlane" as first published and the polished poem that appeared later in Poe's life, and showed that, though greatly improved in form, the underlying spirit was the same.

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III

IN THE CHAPEL

SUNDAY evening Dr. William A. Barr, of St. Paul's Church, Lynchburg, Va., preached in the University Chapel on the text "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant," his thesis being that a man is great in proportion to his loyalty to his highest visions. He made the following reference to Poe:

I believe that the true Poe was an example of the very kind of greatness I have described. The possession of genius alone does not make men great. It is the character back of genius. And Poe was consecrated through all his life to his vision of beauty and truth. He held to it with a tenacity that would not be daunted and much of the apparent vagabondage may be of the kind that Christ enjoined upon his first disciples when he told them that if one city

would not receive them, to shake its dust from their feet and go to another. But after all, wherein consists Poe's great moral delinquency? From all that is known of his life and work he was pure as the snow, and may well stand as a rebuke to the modern literary horde who appear to suppose that to be interesting they must be salacious. Then as to his relations in life, whether as ward, as husband, or as son to the mother of his beautiful Annabel Lee, he appears to have fulfilled these relations with tenderness, fidelity and love. If it be true that he had an infirmity of temper, it is also true that some of the most illustrious saints in history have spent their lives in a struggle with the same infirmity. And so at last his moral delinquency seems to be reduced to a single failing and this but on occasions when he indulged too freely in the cup. According, however, to his own explanation, this was the result of a nervous condition into which his constitution at times fell. It is fair to accept his explanation in the light of the modern view that this failing is at times the result of disease and for this to give him our compassion.

We have a pen picture of Poe by N. P. Willis, in whose employ he spent a number of months. It concludes with these words: "Through all this considerable period we had seen but one presentment of the man: a quiet, patient, industrious and most gentlemanly person, commanding the utmost respect and good feeling by his unvarying deportment and ability."

I submit that a man who could have appeared to Mr. Willis day after day and month after month in this light could not have been so bad. And yet we are obliged to admit an unspeakable pathos in his short and checkered life and above all in its end. Whether, as has been maintained, he was drugged, or whether found in a helpless condition through his own failing, it is unspeakably sad that this fine genius should have been used by a set of political thugs and left to die like a dog.

In looking back upon Poe's career, I recall the words of Carlyle, written with reference to the poet Burns:

"Alas, his sun shone as through a tropical tornado; and the pale shadow of Death eclipsed it at noon! Shrouded in such baleful vapors,

the genius of Burns was never seen in clear azure splendor, enlightening the world. But some beams from it did, by fits, pierce through; and it tinted those clouds with rainbow and orient colours into a glory and stern grandeur, which men silently gazed on with wonder and tears."

IV

IN CABELL HALL—THE RAVENS

THE Raven Society, in its celebration of the Poe centenary, endeavored to emphasize primarily Poe's life and influence from the viewpoint of the poet's *alma mater*.

The speaker of the evening was an alumnus of the University, the poems were by alumni, and the evening was closed by a sketch of Poe's connection with the University of Virginia, illustrated by a set of stereopticon views.

Mr. H. H. Freeman, organist and choir-master of St. John's Church, Washington, D. C., was in charge of the music programme. A very fitting beginning was his rendition of Chopin's "Marche Funèbre" as a memorial to the great poet.

Mrs. Charles Hancock sang Oliver King's arrangement of "Israfel."

Professor Willoughby Reade, of the Department of English and Elocution in the Episcopal

High School, near Alexandria, Virginia, recited "The Raven" and "The Bells."

In interpretation of Poe's purpose in writing "The Raven," Mr. Reade said:

It was with great pleasure, ladies and gentlemen, that I accepted the invitation of the Raven Society to take part in its exercises to-night. To others, however, I shall leave it to pronounce encomiums on the genius of the man whose centennial we are here met to commemorate, and shall pass at once to the reading of his greatest poem.

I hold it to be a hopeless task to give an acceptable reading of a piece of literature which one does not understand, or in which one sees no more than lies on the printed page. And so I offer you, before I read the poem, my interpretation of "The Raven." It may not be the correct one—I do not claim that—but it is the poem as I see and feel it.

Many theories have been advanced in attempts to prove why Poe wrote "The Raven." Most of us are familiar with the explanation which the author himself gives of its origin. He says that he sat down and composed it deliberately—as he might have played a game

of chess—that it was a poem of the mind rather than of the heart; a statement which even his most ardent admirers can hardly credit, knowing, as they do, his dislike for poetry made by rule. Indeed, it has been stated that he afterward said that this explanation was but a hoax! To say that it is a mere jingle of rhymes is folly: no man ever wrote such a poem as this without meaning something. Published two years before the death of his wife, it could not, as some who are not careful as to dates have said, have been inspired by her loss.

I believe that he wrote the poem because he could not help writing it; and, that we might not read his heart's dearest secrets, he hides this cry of his soul in the wonderful diction, the haunting rhyme and rhythm, and the vague mystery of this remarkable composition. At the time it was written, Poe had travelled far on the downward road. The spirit of hopelessness had taken up its abode in his heart. All his nobler feelings, however, were not dead, and although he seemed to realize that this life held but little of good for him, there was still, deep in his heart, a hope of something better in the hereafter.

What is this "ancient, grim, and ghastly raven" but the spirit of evil which has entered the soul of this unhappy man—the spirit of Remorse, of Despair? It is never to leave him again—the bird itself tells him that this is the case in reply to his statement, "On the morrow he will leave me." Near the close of the poem he tries to drive it away, but the effort is a useless one, the last line tells us that.

And what is this "lost Lenore" but his own lost life? Never again on earth will he find it young and pure as once it was, but what of the hereafter—ay, the hereafter? Summoning all his courage, he asks of this evil spirit the great question which every human being asks at some time in his life, "Is there, is there balm in Gilead?" Is there any hope in the hereafter? Driven almost to madness by the bitter negation, he asks a second question:

"Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the
distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden—"

and when the same mocking "Nevermore" falls upon his ear, see how all his nobler feelings assert themselves, how strong his

belief in God, in something better beyond this life, as he exclaims :

“Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken.”

O mighty genius! O blasted life! O weary heart in darkness struggling! God show thee mercy in the day of thy judgment, and for thy faith grant thee “surcease of sorrow” in “that distant Aidenn” where, clasping again thy pure young life, thou shalt know the healing of that balm of Gilead, and where thy soul shall be forever lifted from the shadow of that “Nevermore.”

Dr. James Southall Wilson (M. A., 1905), professor of History in William and Mary, read his poem

“WHOSE HEART-STRINGS ARE A LUTE”

[January 19, 1809—October 7, 1849.]

*The angel Israfel
Sang no more in Heaven:
Silent he lay in Hell
'Neath the flash of the forked levin:*

*Mute were the strings of his lyre
By one great discord shattered;
Seared by the heat of the fire,
And the tones of their melody scattered.
Where the fallen angels dwell,
Burnt by the forked red levin,
The angel Israfel
Sang no more of Heaven.*

When the last mad swirl of the wild red flame
Died from the darkening sky,
And Hell burnt scarlet with Heaven's shame
Purged from the realms on high;
In Heaven, mute was the sweetest lute;
Silent the holy choir;
The lyre, the viol, or the lute
Would never a note suspire:
For deep in Hell was Israfel,
And voiceless was his lyre.

The rivers of God, flowing silently on,
Never a melody sang;
And the breezes of Heaven that brought in
the dawn
Ghostlike in dumbness upsprang.
A sadness fell on the seraphim there,

Watching the great white throne,
And they longed for the passion of praise and
prayer
Israfel's lyre had known;
But they offered a prayer to the God of the
Air,
Bowed to the great white throne.

"Oh grant us in pity, great Father of Love,
Israfel pardoned of wrong,
Whose lyre caught the breezes of Heaven, and
wove
Marvelous mazes of song;
Till one little rift in his lute crept in,
Marring his musical wire:
Shall the whole heart be shattered for one
lone sin?
Grant us again his lyre!"
And the Lord God heard and gave them his
word,
"Purgéd he *shall* be with fire."

And into the frame of a man there came
(This was the purging of fire)
The soul of Israfel out of the flame,
Israfel, lord of the lyre;

To fight the battle of evil and good,
Bound in the body of man;
For the Lord who had suffered and died on
the rood
Knew what suffering can.
So out of Hell came Israfel,
Angel and devil and man.

Then the soul of the music within him awoke;
Longings moved in his breast;
And the chains that had bound him in Hell he
broke,
Strong with his soul's unrest;
And his man's hand smote from his angel
lute
All the anguish of Hell:
Till the hosts of Heaven and earth grew mute
Hearing Israfel.
But the demon within still urged him to sin
After the manner of Hell.

And some men saw the demon, and cried,
"Cast this devil hence!"
And some men, seeing his angel side,
Pleaded his innocence;
But the good Lord, hearing the song divine,

Spake unto his choir,
"The soul of Israfel is mine;
Love hath tuned his lyre."
And the chilly breath of God's messenger,
Death,
Stilled the strings of the lyre.

For the angel and devil had fought a fight
Close in the breast of man,
And the angel had won by his music's might
(This was the good Lord's plan);
And the soul of him passed like a holy strain
Tunefully up on high,
But the human heart of him woke again
Marvelous melody;
Ay, the soul of him passed like a living blast
Musically up to the sky.

*The angel Israfel
Sings evermore in Heaven,
Pleading for them in Hell
Burned by the forkèd levin;
Pleading for them below,
Sinful souls and straying,
Till all the Heaven shall know
The passion of his playing.*

*Where the sinless angels dwell
Around the great white throne,
The angel Israfil
Sings evermore in Heaven.*

Dr. Edward Reinhold Rogers, headmaster of The Jefferson School for Boys, Charlottesville, read his tribute

TO EDGAR ALLAN POE

The orchestra of Life once played
Soul music of a mortal man,
Whose joys and tears, whose hopes and fears
The sounding strings intoned and made
Their strange symphonic plan.

Wild music rose to greet the ears
Of those who listening passed along,
For moans of pain in sad refrain
Were mingled with the voice of tears
In melancholy song:

The bitter cry of hope in vain,
Discordant jars of wasted youth,
The deep despair of baffled prayer,
Ambition's agony of pain,
Portrayed in sounding truth.

So harsh the discord in the air,
To some who stood too near;
But lost and drowned in grosser sound
A voice was singing, pure and rare,
In flute-like beauty clear.

Its song was genius glory-crowned,
The song of Beauty, radiant, fine,
The golden heart, the perfect art,
Of him whose spirit truly found
The path to things divine.

Life's orchestra plays o'er the part;
And we who hear the score today
By God's own will may listen still
As discords die by His own art,
And Beauty holds full sway.

Envoi

Thy years of grief and bitterness are past,
No longer toll the bells in sorrow's strain;
But merrily and cheerily
In glad refrain
The silver bells ring worldwide praise at last.

Dr. Herbert M. Nash (M. D., 1852), of Norfolk, Va., was the speaker of the evening. Dr. Nash's remarks were of peculiar interest since he was the only speaker during the Centenary who had known Poe personally. Poe, not long before his death, was visiting a family in Norfolk, at whose home Dr. Nash was a frequent visitor.

Dr. Nash said:

Little did I think that the visits I was paying to a beautiful, rosy cheeked, and golden haired girl of sixteen, who lived in my neighborhood some fifty years ago, would eventuate in my appearance here this evening, on the eve of the centenary of Edgar Allan Poe.

Professor Kent, who seems to absorb and appropriate information of all sorts, and to make use of it to suit himself, seems to have learned in some way, I know not how, that I had been personally acquainted with the poet. He probably communicated this information to the president of the Raven Society, and a few days ago, I received an invitation from that gentleman, backed by a very persuasive note from Dr. Kent himself, to be present on this

occasion and to address you upon my reminiscence of Poe.

Now I had determined before the receipt of the invitation to be here if possible, not to take an active part in the celebration of his centenary, but only as a looker on, and to enjoy what should be said by those more competent than myself to do honor to the memory of that wonderful man.

Had the subject to be discussed been a medical one, I could not have excused myself for not complying with a request for an address; but to enter at so late a day upon a field so entirely new to myself required my sense of duty to my *alma mater* to be pricked to the very quick, that I might even attempt to say a few words here to-night as to the impressions made upon my youthful nature by the impressive countenance, the dignified yet cordial manner, the cadence of the voice, and the pressure of the hand of Edgar Allan Poe.

It was in September, 1849, that fortune threw me into his presence. The poet visited Norfolk, then a comparatively small city, to deliver his celebrated lecture on "The Poetic

Principle;" and while there was the guest of Mrs. Susan Maxwell, whose daughter Helen, was the attractive nymph before referred to, whom I often found it convenient to visit and to engage with in the then popular game of checkers.

So here I met and was introduced to the distinguished visitor and had the privilege of listening to his interesting conversation and of hearing him recite some of his favorite poems, among them "The Raven," "The Bells," and "Annabel Lee."

I was also present upon the occasion of Poe's lecture delivered at the Norfolk Academy, to a very fair and delighted audience, and was much impressed by the artistic rendering of his selections.

There was nothing that I observed in the poet's appearance that indicated excessive gloominess or sadness. There was an air of dignified repose, which lightened, when speaking to one, into a pleasing smile. But the expression changed quickly and varied with the theme that engaged him. I did not notice the least awkwardness in his demeanor.

I trust I have not thus far described an

imaginary Poe, and that my recollection of him on that occasion is essentially correct.

I have since then met with but one person who reminded me, in person, manner and bearing, of Poe, and that was the late Dr. Marion Sims, whose face was somewhat broader, but who was as inventive in another field, and as distinguished in his chosen profession, as was Poe in the domain of literature.

In enumerating the studies of Poe, while a student in this University, stress has been laid upon his extraordinary proficiency in the languages; but I have suspected, from the readiness he evinced in the solution of the enigmas and curious problems submitted to him, that either he must have been almost as familiar with the calculus of probabilities as the great La Place himself, or that he was the most ingenious guesser the world has ever seen.

I shall not attempt to dwell upon the poet's genius, which has been analyzed and so justly praised here by Mr. Mabie on a former happy occasion, and which has been written of everywhere that his matchless creations have been read and felt; nor of his contemporaries of the nineteenth century, which were legion, in

every branch of human thought, and of every degree of fame in science, in speculative thought, in art and literature.

Now, what must have been the energetic interaction of the cells of his amazing brain when engaged in the invention of his marvelous tales and his unique verses? Like a volcano in action, throwing out fire and smoke, light and darkness, the weird phenomenon attended by the very quaking of the earth around; so that great brain, and body little more than frail, so buffeted by the rude fortune that seemed almost inseparable from his personality, his *alter ego*, must have quailed at times under the stress of his efforts.

It is confidently asserted that Poe never wrote a line while under the influence of alcoholic stimulants; on the contrary, when so influenced, he was sick almost unto death! No impurity stains his record.

Byron has written,

“Man’s love is of man’s life a thing apart;
’Tis woman’s whole existence.”

But Poe’s love was *distinctly feminine* in

nature, not to be thrown off as an outer garment. It was true.

I may be pardoned in taking a physician's view of his not infrequent mental states. In my humble opinion, Poe at such times was the victim of an abnormal psychology. There are conditions known as the *psycho-neuroses* of exhaustion, during which there is a more or less complete paralysis of the will.

Attacks may ensue similar to, but not identical with, epileptic mania. We know that even hysteria is sometimes characterized by a dissociation of consciousness.

Prof. Janet has defined dipsomania as "in reality a crisis of depression in which the subject feels the need of being excited by means of a poison, the effect of which he knows only too well; by alcohol."

But Poe was certainly no dipsomaniac. As a medical man, I have seen cases analogous to his, though none possessing even an approach to his scintillating intellect.

They were not drunkards, in the usual acceptance of the term. They, also, were the victims of *psycho-neuroses*, *morbid*, *irresistible impulses*.

Mr. Neff then introduced Dr. Charles W. Kent, who, in calling attention to the interest attaching to Poe's connection with the University of Virginia, stated that, while it was true that Poe had not made any direct references to his *alma mater*, it was also true that a number of his earlier poems were in all probability either prepared or revised at the University of Virginia and that he certainly cultivated during his session here the art of short-story writing. Perhaps, too, he was influenced by the surroundings, as well he might have been by the new and strange life of the young institution. Such thoughts as these made pictorial representations of the time in which Poe lived at the University of especial interest. Following these general introductory remarks, ten or a dozen views of the early University and the men connected with its history were thrown on the screen and explained one by one. Among them were pictures of Dr. Dunlison, who was chairman of the faculty during Poe's session; Madison, Monroe and General Cocke, members of the Board of Visitors, before whom the young poet must have stood his

final oral examinations; the Rotunda and Lawn in the early days; the exterior and interior of No. 13 West Range, where Poe roomed the greater part of the session he spent at the University, and the Colonnade clubhouse, which was in those days the Library; William Wertenbaker, the librarian appointed by Mr. Jefferson, and a scene from the Ragged Mountains.

Mr. H. H. Freeman, organist and choir-master of St. John's Church, Washington, D. C., played during the evening Chopin's Funeral March from the G minor Sonata, arranged for the organ* by Sir John Stainer; Bohm's Staccato in D flat, arranged for the organ by Mr. Freeman; Lemare's Andantino in D flat, and Schubert's Military March in D major, arranged for the organ by W. T. Best.

*The organ in Cabell Hall, the gift of Mr. Andrew Carnegie, was built by Skinner. It is of the electro-pneumatic action type, and is played from a console of four keyboards.

V

IN MADISON HALL

AT 11 o'clock Tuesday morning, the one hundredth anniversary of Poe's birth, Dr. Charles W. Kent presided at commemorative exercises held in Madison Hall, whose special purpose was to offer an opportunity for a study of Poe's influence beyond the limits of his own country. Dr. Kent addressed the assemblage:

We have assembled this morning for the purpose of doing further honor to the memory of Edgar Allan Poe. On Saturday evening the Jefferson Literary Society of which he was a member recalled his close connection with the student life of the University of Virginia by reviving the story of Poe's University residence and his connection with our literary activities; on Sunday evening some of us had the privilege of hearing from the distinguished clergyman who occupied our Chapel pulpit his

gracious and grateful tribute to Edgar Allan Poe and his plea for a right judgment of his failures and foibles.

On last evening the Raven Society entertained us thoroughly by a unique celebration of Poe's interest as a man and gifts as an artist.

While the University of Virginia lays claim to her distinguished son to whom, at all times, through good report and ill, she has been loyal and kindly, she recognizes that he cannot be confined within the narrow compass of her encircling care. When he passed from these walls into the outer world he committed himself to the judgment, too often tardy and grudging, of his American countrymen. His recognition, however, has now past far beyond the limits of his University, his Southland, and even his entire country and his fame has extended throughout all of the nations of Western Europe and even to the more remote lands of the Orient. In recognition of the universality of his fame and the cosmopolitanism of his literary genius we have chosen at this morning meeting to remind ourselves and you of his appreciation abroad. That this may be rightly set before you, we have invited distinguished

speakers representing other languages and other civilizations and have great satisfaction in believing that their testimony will convince even the most sceptical among you of the true worth and increasing fame of the University's most distinguished son.

Dr. William Harrison Faulkner read letters from distinguished men in England, France and Germany. A letter from Richard Dehmel of Hamburg, a German poet of distinction, contained this tribute:—

Von Entdeckungen und Abenteuern
War des Herz Amerikas geschwellt,
Da entlad es sich mit wilden Feuern,
Und ein Dichter ward zum ungeheuern
Krater einer innern neuen Welt—

which Dr. James Taft Hatfield of Northwestern University instantly rendered into English and read, as follows:

From its endless quest and eager faring
Burned the new world's heart, too strained
and tense:
Forth it flamed, all older barriers tearing,
And a poet came to be the daring
Crater of his land's new wakened sense.

Other poems contributed for the occasion were:

Arthur Christopher Benson, Tremans,
Horsted Keynes, Sussex:

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Singer, whose song was as the ray
That doth the rifted cloudland part,
Too rarely heard, the magic lay
That flowed from thy o'er-brimming heart!
And if thy fantasy beguiled
With darkest fears man's darker fate,
Not as a laughter-loving child
Thou didst thy soul interrogate.
What stain of strife, what dust of fight
Unequal, soiled that radiant brow?
Made one with life, and truth, and light,
Thou hast thy joyful answer now!

Mr. John Boyd, Montreal, Canada:

Wild child of genius with his witching lyre,
Dreamer of dreams of rarest fantasy,
Upon the earth he flashed with meteor fire,
And in his wake rolled waves of melody,
Seraphic songs as if from Heaven's choir,
With elfin music, weird and mystical,
Bewitching notes that golden thoughts inspire,
Angelic strains, divinely musical.
All praise be his on this his natal day,
May all his faults and frailties be forgot,
Lay laurels on his tomb and honors pay,
Think only of the glory that he wrought,
Hail, sister nation, for thy great son's sake,
A kindred soul to Keats, and Burns,
and Blake.

Dr. Edward Dowden, Trinity College,
Dublin:

Seeker for Eldorado, magic land
Whose gold is beauty, fine spun, amber
clear,
Over what moon-mountain, down what val-
ley of fear,
By what lone waters fringed with pallid sand
Did thy foot falter? Say, what airs have
fann'd
Thy fevered brow, blown from no terrene
sphere,
What rustling wings, what echoes thrilled
thine ear
From mighty tombs whose brazen ports ex-
pand?

Seeker, who never quite attained, yet caught,
Moulded and fashioned, as by strictest law,
The rainbow's moon-mist and the flying
gleam
To mortal loveliness, for pity or for awe
To us what carven dreams thy hand has
brought,
Dreams with the serried logic of a dream!

Dr. Cäsar Fleischlen, Berlin:

LIED DES LEBENS

Früh am Morgen
Sturm und Wolken,
Sonne dann und blauer Himmel
Mittag prächtig Höh und Hag.

Schmetterlinge,
Blühende Rosen
Schwalbenlieder
Finkenschlag

Still nun wird es rings und stiller.
Müde fällt am Mast die Fahne,
Licht und Lust ist
Am Erblassen.

Schmetterling—und Lied—verlassen
Liegen einsam
Höh und Hag.
Und in Abend—
Lautlos leiser
Dämmerung zerrinnt der Tag.

The Chairman, Dr. Kent:

In no country has Poe been so appreciated and so distinctly flattered by sincere imitation as in France. The development of the short-story, which has reached such a marked degree of excellence both in France and America, has its common starting point in Edgar Allan Poe. This influence was transmitted to France through the translations of Baudelaire, and from this day to ours the influence of Poe, both in poetry and prose, has been consciously felt by the artists of our sister republic. Unable because of distance to summon to our aid a speaker from fair France, we have been singularly fortunate in procuring as her representative on this occasion Dr. Alcée Fortier of Tulane University, designated by one of his colleagues as our "Prince of Creoles." I have the honor to introduce Dr. Fortier who will speak to you in the language counted by him and his compatriots as *la plus belle langue du monde*.

Dr. Fortier:

Je suis heureux de me trouver parmi vous aujourd'hui pour prendre part à la célébration

du centenaire de la naissance d'Edgar Allan Poe. C'est ici même que l'on doit célébrer cet événement avec le plus d'éclat, à cette grande Université de la Virginie, où le célèbre écrivain commença sa carrière littéraire. Ici vécut Poe, ici il fut étudiant, ici il fut inspiré par l'atmosphère vivifiante de la magnifique institution fondée par Jefferson. Le nom de l'auteur du "Corbeau," de "la Chute de la Maison d'Usher" et autres histoires admirables, est indissolublement lié à celui de l'Université de la Virginie, et le nom de l'Université à celui de Poe.

L'étudiant doit une grande reconnaissance au collège qui lui a donné la vie intellectuelle, mais le collège, à son tour, ne doit pas oublier l'ancien élève qui, par son génie, a contribué à illustrer son *alma mater*. Je sais bien que cette Université serait arrivée à la célébrité sans l'aide d'Edgar Poe, mais celui-ci a grandement ajouté à la gloire de l'institution, et il est éminemment juste qu'elle se souvienne du poète et qu'elle l'honore. En agissant ainsi l'Université représente aussi le grand état de la Virginie qu'aimait tant Poe, et dont l'admirable civilisation exerça sur lui une si grande influence que, malgré ses égarements, il lui

resta toujours dans l'âme l'amour du beau et du vrai.

Nous ne pouvons admettre qu'un homme soit jamais vraiment grand, s'il lui manque la grandeur morale, et une institution d'enseignement supérieur ne donnera pas cet homme en exemple, quelque vaste que soit son génie. Edgar Poe fut plus malheureux que coupable, et nous qui admirons ses belles qualités mentales, lui pardonnons ses fautes, parce qu'il aima l'art, parce qu'il ne ternit jamais un nom de femme dans ses vers ni dans sa prose, et parce qu'il étudia l'âme humaine et tâcha d'en comprendre les mystères. Telle est l'opinion qu'ont de lui les professeurs de l'Université de la Virginie, qui ont fait une étude approfondie de ses oeuvres littéraires et de sa vie malheureuse. Telle est l'opinion de M. le Docteur James A. Harrison, qui a écrit la biographie la plus complète et la plus sympathique du poète; telle est l'opinion de M. le Docteur Charles W. Kent, qui a si bien compris le génie de Poe; telle est l'opinion enfin de l'éminent Président de cette Université, dont le goût littéraire est si fin et si parfait. C'est parce que ces messieurs savent qu'Edgar Poe

ne fut pas le misérable, que nous présente une déplorable légende, qu'ils honorent aujourd'hui sa mémoire et nous ont invités à l'honorer avec eux.

L'Université de la Virginie est fière du plus illustre homme de lettres parmi ses anciens élèves, elle lui sait gré de la gloire qu'il a donnée à elle, à l'état de la Virginie, et aux États-Unis. Pendant de longues années, après que notre pays eut acquis son indépendance, il n'était connu en Europe que par ses institutions politiques, et par son merveilleux développement industriel et commercial. A peine quelques noms d'écrivains avaient traversé l'Océan et étaient mentionnés de temps en temps, mais lorsque le Corbeau de Poe eut croassé son immortelle complainte, que le Scarabée d'Or eut scintillé dans la nuit, et qu'eurent paru les formes éthérées de Morella et de Ligeia, on sut dans la vieille Europe que la jeune république occidentale avait donné naissance à un vrai poète, à un prosateur exquis. De tous les écrivains américains Edgar Poe est le plus connu en Europe. Il est le seul qui fasse, pour ainsi dire, partie de la littérature française, qui soit réellement *fran-*

cisé, comme l'a si bien dit Émile Hennequin. Voyons donc quelle est la genèse de cette extraordinaire popularité.

Dès 1841, peu après la publication du "Double Assassinat dans la Rue Morgue," M. le Docteur James A. Harrison nous dit que trois journaux de Paris s'approprièrent et se disputèrent ce conte étrange de ratiocination. Ce qui commença, cependant, la réputation de Poe en France fut un article de E. D. Forgues, publié dans "la Revue des Deux Mondes" du 15 octobre, 1846, "les Contes d'Edgar A. Poe." M. Forgues commence son article par une comparaison entre "l'Essai Philosophique sur les Probabilités" de Laplace et le système de Poe. Il dit que les contes de l'auteur américain ont une parenté évidente avec la philosophie de Laplace, quoiqu' ils ne conduisent pas à un aussi noble but et n'émanent pas d'une pensée aussi vigoureuse. La faculté inspiratrice de Poe, c'est le raisonnement; sa muse, c'est la logique, son moyen d'agir sur les lecteurs, c'est le doute. "L'auteur met aux prises Oedipe et le sphinx, le héros et un logogriphe." Le mystère paraît impénétrable, l'intelligence s'irrite contre le voile étendu devant elle, mais

sort victorieuse de la lutte après des travaux extraordinaires.

“*Monos et Una*,” d’après M. Forgues, est une monographie patiente, méthodique, scientifique, sur la fraternité du sommeil et de la mort. La logique de Poe ne dévie que rarement les principes une fois posés; elle est claire et intelligible, et s’empare du lecteur malgré lui. C’est sans nul doute, à mon avis, cette logique impeccable, cette clarté, malgré l’obscurité apparente, que l’on trouve dans les contes de Poe, qui le rendirent si populaire en France, car ce sont les traits caractéristiques de l’esprit français. Les grands écrivains de la France reconnurent en Poe une affinité littéraire et lui donnèrent droit de cité parmi eux.

M. Forgues ne se contente pas, cependant, de présenter le logicien à ses compatriotes; il veut aussi leur faire voir le poète, l’inventeur de fantaisies sans but, et il fait l’analyse du “*Chat Noir*” et de “*l’Homme des Foules*.” Il préfère les quelques pages de certains contes de Poe à de longs volumes, et comprend le mérite du conte, ce genre où l’on “condense,” dit-il, “en peu de mots sous forme de récit, toute une théorie abstraite, tous les éléments

d'une composition originale." M. Forgues ne veut pas établir un parallèle en règle entre l'auteur américain et les feuilletonistes modernes, mais, dit-il, "il sera opportun et utile de les comparer quand le temps aura consolidé la réputation naissante du conteur étranger, et—qui sait?—ébranlé quelque peu celle de nos romanciers féconds." Le critique français de 1846 était prophète: les nombreux volumes d'Alexandre Dumas, quoiqu'ils intéressent encore les jeunes gens de vingt ans, ne font presque plus partie de la littérature, tandis que les contes de Poe sont des bijoux littéraires, dont l'éclat augmente; à mesure que s'écoulent les années.

L'article de M. Forgues attira l'attention de Mme. Gabrielle Meunier, qui traduisit quelques-uns des contes de Poe. Ce grand écrivain, néanmoins, serait resté presque inconnu en France, s'il n'avait trouvé en Charles Baudelaire une affinité littéraire extraordinaire et un traducteur merveilleux. On n'avait rien vu de pareil en France aux contes de Poe, malgré la concision et la clarté caractéristiques du style français, si ce n'était "la Vénus d'Ille" de Mérimée, publiée en 1837. Aussi la

traduction de Baudelaire en 1848, et ensuite en 1856, des "Histoires Extraordinaires" eut-elle un immense succès. Le traducteur consacra à l'auteur américain une notice sympathique et éclairée, et quoiqu'il n'eût pas les documents qui exonèrent le poète des calomnies de Griswold il le défend contre son biographe malveillant. Il dit qu'Edgar Poe et sa patrie n'étaient pas de niveau, et il ajoute que Poe avait "une délicatesse exquise de sens qu'une note fausse torturait, une finesse de goût que tout excepté l'exacte proportion, révoltait, un amour insatiable du Beau, qui avait pris la puissance d'une passion morbide." Il était certainement impossible que Poe pût être bien compris par ses compatriotes de la première moitié du XIX^e siècle.

Baudelaire raconte la vie de Poe, nous présente son portrait physique et moral et fait de lui un magnifique éloge que nous citons tout entier. "Ce n'est pas par ses miracles matériels, qui pourtant ont fait sa renommée qu'il lui sera donné de conquérir l'admiration des gens qui pensent, c'est par son amour du Beau, par sa connaissance des conditions harmoniques de la beauté, par sa poésie profonde

et plaintive, ouvragée néanmoins, transparente et correcte comme un bijou de cristal—par son admirable style, pur et bizarre,—serré comme les mailles d'une Armure,—complaisant et minutieux,—et dont la plus légère intention sert à pousser doucement le lecteur vers un but voulu,—et enfin surtout par ce génie tout spécial, par ce tempérament unique qui lui a permis de peindre et d'expliquer, d'une manière impeccable, saisissante, *l'exception dans l'ordre moral*.—Diderot, pour prendre un exemple entre cent, est un auteur sanguin; Poe est l'écrivain des nerfs, et même de quelque chose de plus,—et le meilleur que je connaisse." "Quelquefois, des échappées magnifiques, gorgées de lumières et de couleur, s'ouvrent soudainement dans ses paysages, et l'on voit apparaître au fond de leurs horizons des villes orientales et des architectures, vaporisées par la distance, où le soleil jette des pluies d'or."

Dans cette appréciation de son auteur favori Baudelaire s'élève à la hauteur de son modèle comme prosateur, et nous verrons bientôt qu'il l'égale presque comme poète. Je ne sais réellement si l'Edgar Poe français n'est pas

supérieur au Poe de langue anglaise. Écoutez l'admirable traduction de Baudelaire :

“Les années, les années peuvent passer mais le souvenir de cet instant—jamais ! Ah ! les fleurs et la vigne n'étaient pas choses inconnues pour moi—mais l'aconit et le cyprès m'ombragèrent nuit et jour. Et je perdis tout sentiment du temps et des lieux, et les étoiles de ma destinée disparurent du ciel, et dès lors la terre devint ténébreuse, et toutes les figures terrestres passèrent près de moi comme des ombres voltigeantes, et parmi elles je n'en voyais qu'une—Morella ! Les vents du firmaments ne soupiraient qu'un son à mes oreilles, et le clapotement de la mer murmurait incessamment ; ‘Morella !’ Mais elle mourut, et de mes propres mains je la portai à sa tombe, et je ris d'un amer et long rire, quand, dans le caveau où je déposai la seconde, je ne découvris aucune trace de la première—Morella.”

En 1857 Baudelaire publia “les Nouvelles Histoires Extraordinaires ;” en 1858, “les Aventures d'Arthur Gordon Pym ;” en 1864, “Euréka,” et en 1865, “les Histoires Grotesques et Sérieuses.” Ces traductions

sont dignes des premières et naturalisèrent en France les contes et les nouvelles de Poe. "Les Petits Poèmes en Prose" de Baudelaire furent, sans nul doute, comme beaucoup de ses vers, inspirés par Poe. On y voit des études étranges et l'amour de l'art, mais on voit souvent aussi dans la prose et dans les vers de Baudelaire, des grossièretés de langage et des impuretés de pensée qu'on ne trouve jamais dans Poe. On ne peut, cependant, qu'admirer "l'Étranger," à la première page des "Petits Poèmes en Prose." On y trouve le sentiment poétique de Poe :

"Qui aimes-tu le mieux, homme énigmatique, dis? ton père, ta mère, ta soeur ou ton frère?"

"Je n'ai ni père, ni mère, ni soeur, ni frère."

"Les amis?"

"Vous vous servez là d'une parole dont le sens m'est resté jusqu'à ce jour inconnu."

"Ta patrie?"

"J'ignore sous quelle latitude elle est située."

"La beauté?"

"Je l'aimerais volontiers, déesse et immortelle."

“L’or?”

“Je le hais comme vous haïssez Dieu.”

“Eh! qu’aimes-tu donc, extraordinaire étranger?”

“J’aime les nuages—les nuages qui passent
....là bas....les merveilleux nuages!”

“Le Vieux Saltimbanque” est un portrait tel qu’aurait pu le dessiner Poe, un portrait implacable de vérité, où cependant la sympathie pour les vaincus de la vie se mêle au sentiment d’horreur que fait éprouver la vue d’un vieil homme voûté, caduc, décrépît. Nous reviendrons à l’influence de Poe sur Baudelaire poète. Poe le prosateur attira l’attention de Barbey d’Aurevilly, et cet étrange écrivain consacra à l’auteur américain plusieurs articles, entre 1853 et 1883. Il ne lui est pas aussi sympathique que Baudelaire, mais il reconnaît sa volonté extraordinaire, et l’appelle “le plus énergique des artistes volontaires.” Il dit que Poe “se sert d’une analyse inouïe et qu’il pousse à la fatigue suprême, à l’aide d’on ne sait quel prodigieux microscope sur la pulpe même du cerveau.”
....“Positivement le lecteur assiste à l’opération du chirurgien; positivement, il

entend crier l'acier de l'instrument et sent les douleurs."

Barbey d'Aurevilly ne connut d'abord Poe que par sa biographie par Baudelaire. Il le jugea moins sévèrement, lorsqu'il eut lu la vie que joignit Émile Hennequin à sa traduction des "Contes Grotesques." Il lui donna alors "la Royauté des hommes de génie malheureux."

Revenons maintenant à Baudelaire et à Poe, et voyons ce que Théophile Gautier a dit d'eux. Nous ne doutons aucunement que Poe n'ait eu une certaine influence sur Gautier, le poète de "l'art pour l'art," et sur son école. Il est probable que les contes de Poe ont inspiré "la Morte Amoureuse," "le Roman de la Momie," et "Spirite." Baudelaire avait dédié ses extraordinaires "Fleurs du Mal" à Gautier, et celui-ci écrivit une notice sur l'auteur du livre dans laquelle il fit une fine analyse du génie de Baudelaire et de celui de Poe. Il dit qu'au-dessus de l'immonde fourmillement de misère, de laid et de perversité que présentent souvent "les Fleurs du Mal," "loin, bien loin dans l'inaltérable azur, flotte l'admirable fantôme de

la Béatrix, l'idéal toujours désiré, jamais atteint, la beauté supérieure et divine incarnée sous une forme de femme éthérée, spiritualisée, faite de lumière, de flamme et de parfum, une vapeur, un rêve, un reflet du monde aromal et séraphique comme les Ligeia, les Morella, les Una, les Eléonore d'Edgar Poe et la Seraphita-Seraphitus de Balzac, cette étonnante création."

Gautier appelle Poe "un singulier génie d'une individualité si rare, si tranchée, si exceptionnelle." Il dit qu'en France le nom de Baudelaire est inséparable de celui de Poe, et que le souvenir de l'un éveille immédiatement la pensée de l'autre. "Il semble même parfois," ajoute-t-il, "que les idées de l'Américain appartiennent en propre au Français." Une des histoires les plus fortes de Poe est "le Chat Noir," qui nous terrifie, lorsqu'il apparaît "avec sa gueule rouge et son oeil unique flamboyant." Baudelaire écrivit trois poèmes sur les chats et dit d'eux :

Ils prennent en songeant les nobles attitudes
Des grands sphinx allongés au fond des solitudes,
Qui semblent s'endormir dans un rêve sans fin ;

Leurs reins féconds sont pleins d'étincelles
magiques,
Et des parcelles d'or ainsi qu'un sable fin,
Étoilent vaguement leurs prunelles mystiques.

On voit Edgar Poe dans les plus beaux poèmes de Baudelaire, dans "Don Juan aux Enfers," dans "les Petites Vieilles," dans "le Soleil," et surtout dans, "le Mort Joyeux," qui n'est qu'une autre forme du "Ver Conquérant," de Poe, et que nous citerons en entier, malgré l'horreur du sujet, pour faire voir l'affinité littéraire et mentale vraiment extraordinaire des deux poètes.

Dans une terre grasse et pleine d'escargots
Je veux creuser moi-même une fosse profonde,
Où je puisse à loisir étaler mes vieux os
Et dormir dans l'oubli comme un requin
dans l'onde.

Je hais les testaments et je hais les tombeaux;
Plutôt que d'implorer une larme du monde,
Vivant, j'aimerais mieux inviter les corbeaux
À saigner tous les bouts de ma carcasse
immonde.

O vers ! noirs compagnons sans oreille et sans
yeux,
Voyez venir à vous un mort libre et joyeux !
Philosophes viveurs, fils de la pourriture.

A travers ma ruine allez donc sans remords,
Et dites-moi s'il est encore quelque torture
Pour ce vieux corps sans âme et mort parmi
les morts !

“William Wilson,” où Edgar Poe se double d’une manière si étonnante, a dû plaire infiniment à Baudelaire, ainsi que l’admirable “Chute de la Maison d’Usher,” où le sentiment de la terreur est si intense. Baudelaire a dû rêver bien souvent à Eléonora, qu’il eût voulu suivre dans la vallée du Gazon Diapré, où “les fleurs étoilées s’étaient abîmées dans le tronc des arbres; où avaient dépéri les asphodèles d’un rouge de rubis,” qu’avaient remplacées “les sombres violettes, semblables à des yeux qui se convulsaient péniblement et regorgeaient toujours de larmes de rosée;” d’où “le volumineux nuage retombé dans les régions d’Hespérus avait emporté le spectacle infini de sa pourpre et de sa magnificence.” Ces

admirables phrases de Poe sont rendues en français par son traducteur avec une exactitude saisissante, un sens poétique extraordinaire.

L'influence de Poe le conteur se fait voir dans Villiers de l'Isle Adam, Paul Hervieu, Henri de Régnier; dans Guy de Maupassant, qui l'égale dans "le Horla" et autres oeuvres d'un réalisme intense; dans Jules Verne, qui imite ses romans scientifiques, comme "Hans Pfaal," ou ses aventures de voyage, comme "Gordon Pym," dans Gaboriau, dont le M. Lecoq est frère de Legrand et de Dupin; dans Jean Richepin, dont "les Morts Bizarres," sont imitées directement des contes de Poe, où celui-ci fait une étude si extraordinaire et si poignante de la mort. "Le Disséqué" de Richepin nous rappelle "le Cas de M. Waldemar," et Féru, l'étudiant en médecine, nous intéresse presque autant que les personnages les plus sombres de Poe. Il veut prendre la matière en flagrant délit de pensée. "Il suffirait d'arriver à ceci," dit Féru, "analyser, disséquer, tenir sous ses doigts un cerveau pensant. Évidemment on saisirait la pensée, on la sentirait, on la toucherait, comme on

saisit, comme on sent, comme on touche un phénomène électrique, par exemple.” Pour espérer une telle possibilité, Fêru veut disséquer des hommes vivants. Il tuerait des hommes pour le bien des hommes. A la fin de la Commune, dans la cuisine de la crêmerie borgne, “le Rendez-vous des Affamés,” un corps tombe à travers une marquise en verre. C’est Fêru, l’étudiant en médecine. On se baisse pour le relever, mais on est saisi par une épouvantable horreur, “le malheureux avait la poitrine dépouillée, les chairs à vif, et cela non pas par l’effet du verre, mais par suite d’une opération. Il était disséqué.” Il s’était disséqué, veut dire l’auteur.

Le 1^{er} mai 1886 “la Revue des Deux Mondes” publia un article très intéressant sur “les Poètes Américains,” par Th. Bentzon (Mme. Blanc), qui visita les Etats-Unis il y a quelques années, et fit un sympathique portrait de la femme américaine. Mme. Blanc dit que Poe “restera inimitable, quelque effort que fassent pour approcher de lui les exploiters du macabre grotesque ou larmoyant.” Elle dit que le poète américain adorait le beau comme Heine et “qu’il voyait sa suprême ex-

pression dans la tristesse que nous cause le mal de la vie et notre incapacité à saisir l'inconnu."

Mentionnons encore d'autres articles publiés dans "la Revue des Deux Mondes:" Un par T. de Wyzewa, le 15 octobre 1894, et deux en 1897 par Arvède Barine (Mme. Georges Vincens). M. de Wyzewa dit des vers de Poe: "Ils sont les plus magnifiques, à mon gré, de tous ceux qui existent dans la langue anglaise. Ce sont des chefs-d'oeuvre d'émotion et de musique: à eux seuls, ils suffiraient pour la gloire d'un écrivain." M. de Wyzewa ajoute qu'il "a inauguré en outre une dizaine au moins de genres littéraires tout autres, dont chacun a été ensuite largement exploité."

Les articles d'Arvède Barine ont pour titre, "Essais de Littérature Pathologique." Ils ne nous plaisent pas autant que le livre de M. Émile Lauvrière, publié en 1904, "Edgar Poe, sa vie et son Oeuvre, Étude de Psychologie Pathologique." Voilà l'ouvrage le plus complet sur Poe qui ait paru en France. L'auteur consacre 730 pages à son sujet et le traite à fond. Il donne la vie du grand poète américain, reconnaît ses fautes, les excuse, jusqu'à un certain point, et le plaint. Il

étudie de la manière la plus détaillée les oeuvres du poète et du prosateur, et nous pouvons dire que son analyse du "Corbeau" est la plus pénétrante que nous ayons lue : le Corbeau, c'est Poe lui-même ; Lénore, c'est encore lui. "Il y a donc," dit le critique français, "dans le puissant symbolisme de ce petit drame pathétique, toute l'âme du poète : c'est son être conscient aux prises avec son idéal extatique et avec sa mélancolie désespérée. Le volume de 1845, adjoute M. Lauvrière, contient assez de chefs-d'oeuvre pour immortaliser un nom. "Il n'a pas seulement 'le Corbeau' qui, malgré des raffinements d'art qui touchent à l'artifice, restera par la solidité de son fond comme pour la vigueur de ses effets, par la prestigieuse magie de sa musique comme par le poignant pathétique de son désespoir, la plus puissante et, partant, la plus populaire des oeuvres de Poe, un vrai chef-d'oeuvre de poésie fantastique, sans égal en beaucoup de langues et avec lequel ne peut rivaliser dans la poésie anglaise que le charme moins conquérant, mais plus insinuant du "Vieux Marin" de Coleridge.

M. Lauvrière étudie en Poe conteur, le fan-

tastique, la peur, l'impulsion, la curiosité l'imagination, la logique et le style, et fait un travail vraiment magistral. Poe critique, Poe cosmogoniste, nous intéressent moins que Poe poète et Poe conteur, mais je le répète, le livre de M. Lauvrière est remarquable. Il est écrit avec une clarté bien française, avec une exactitude toute scientifique, et d'un style, parfois simple, parfois fort, et parfois poétique comme les vers mêmes de l'auteur du "Corbeau."

De nombreux volumes ont été publiés en France sur Edgar Poe, et ses oeuvres ont été traduites maintes fois en français. Parmi ces traductions, outre celles de Baudelaire, nous pouvons mentionner les poèmes traduits par Stéphane Mallarmé, et "le Scarabée d'Or," par J. H. Rosny. C'est, néanmoins, Baudelaire, comme nous l'avons dit, qui naturalisa Poe en France. Son admiration fut telle qu'il fut possédé de son auteur favori, et Asselineau, cité par M. Lauvrière, nous dit "qu' à tout venant, où qu'il se trouvât, dans la rue, au café, dans une imprimerie, le matin, le soir, il allait demandant: 'Connaissez-vous Edgar Poe,' et selon la réponse, il épanchait son enthousiasme ou pressait de questions son

auditeur. Jules Lemaître, lui-même, le célèbre écrivain, dans un "Dialogue des Morts," a placé Poe en compagnie de Shakespeare et de Platon, quoiqu'il dise qu'ils présentent trois exemplaires de l'espèce humaine aussi dissemblables que possible.

Nous avons donné l'opinion des critiques français sur Edgar Poe; nous allons maintenant étudier brièvement quelle fut son influence sur la poésie française. Nous nous servirons pour ce petit travail de l'excellente "Anthologie des Poètes Français Contemporains," de M. G. Walch, publiée en 1906. Nous avons déjà comparé Poe poète à Baudelaire poète, et nous avons vu l'influence de l'Américain sur le Français. Quant aux autres poètes inspirés par Poe, ils le furent, en général, indirectement et principalement par l'entremise de Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé, peut-être, le seul excepté. Baudelaire répéta le précepte de Poe que la poésie n'a d'autre objet qu'elle-même. C'est la doctrine de "l'art pour l'art" de Théophile Gautier, et nous la voyons portée à un haut point de perfection par Théodore de Banville, qui avait, disait-on, "pour âme la poésie même."

Barbey d'Aurevilly est de l'école de Poe, ainsi que Villiers de l'Isle Adam et Verlaine, cet étonnant bohème, que M. Anatole France compare à Villon, le grand poète du XV^e siècle. Verlaine a même un poème intitulé "Nevermore" que nous citons ici comme un souvenir intéressant du "Corbeau."

NEVERMORE!

Souvenir, souvenir, que me veux-tu? L'automne

Faisait voler la grive à travers l'air atone
Et le soleil dardait un rayon monotone
Sur le bois jaunissant où la bise détone.

Nous étions seul à seule et marchions en rêvant,

Elle et moi, les cheveux et la pensée au vent.
Soudain, tournant vers moi son regard émouvant :

"Quel fut ton plus beau jour?" fit sa voix d'or vivant.

Sa voix douce et sonore, au frais timbre angélique.

Un sourire discret lui donna la réplique,
Et je baisai sa main blanche, dévotement.

Ah! les premières fleurs, qu'elles sont parfumées!

Et qu'il bruit avec un murmure charmant
Le premier "oui" qui sort de lèvres bien-aimées!

Chez plusieurs des Parnassiens de la première heure, tels que Xavier de Ricard, Léon Dierx, Catulle Mendès, ainsi que chez plusieurs écrivains des deux autres Parnasses, on voit l'influence de Poe. Le Parnasse fut une réaction contre le romantisme, et fut suivi par le symbolisme, qu'on a parfois appelé "le décadent." Arthur Rimbaud, l'auteur du curieux "Sonnet des Voyelles," fut un des précurseurs du symbolisme. Henri de Régnier en fut le chef incontesté, et subit, sans aucun doute, l'influence de notre poète américain. Lisons surtout l'admirable sonnet, "la Terre Douleuruse a bu le Sang des Rêves:"

La terre douloureuse a bu le sang des Rêves,
Le vol évanoui des ailes a passé,
Et le flux de la Mer a, ce soir, effacé
Le mystère des pas sur le sable des grèves.

Au delta débordant son onde de massacre
Pierre à pierre ont croulé le temple et la cité,
Et sous le flot rayonne un éclair irrité
D'or barbare frisant au front d'un simulacre.

Vers la forêt néfaste vibre un cri de mort ;
Dans l'ombre où son passage a hurlé gronde
encor
La disparition d'une horde farouche ;

Et le masque muet du Sphinx où nul n'explique
L'énigme qui crispait la ligne de sa bouche,
Rit dans la pourpre en sang de ce coucher
tragique.

Stéphane Mallarmé, acclamé le Maître par beaucoup de jeunes poètes, fut selon l'expression d'un critique, "imprégné" d'Edgar Poe. Jean Richepin poète nous rappelle l'auteur du "Corbeau," ainsi que René Ghil, Edmond Haraucourt, Gustave Kahn, Jules Laforgue, Grégoire Le Roy, Adolphe Retté, Maurice Rollinat, l'auteur des "Névroses," parmi beaucoup d'autres poètes contemporains. Mentionnons, cependant, d'une manière toute spéciale, deux grands écrivains belges, Maurice

Maeterlinck, dont on a dit : "Poe, le Poe de la 'Maison Usher,' est à coup sûr, son maître familier;" et Emile Verhaeren. Appelons encore l'attention sur deux célèbres poètes français, nés aux États-Unis : Stuart Merrill, à Long Island, et Francis Vielé-Griffin, né à Norfolk, en Virginie. Le petit poème de celui-ci, "Fleurs du Chemin," est charmant et est un exemple de la "volonté" de Poe :

Crois, Vie ou Mort, que t'importe,

En l'éblouissement d'amour ?

Prie en ton âme forte :

Que t'importe nuit ou jour ?

Car tu sauras des rêves vastes

Si tu sais l'unique loi :

Il n'est pas de nuit sous les astres

Et toute l'ombre est en toi.

Aime, Honte ou Gloire, qu'importe,

A toi, dont voici le tour ?

Chante de ta voix qui porte

Le message de tout amour ?

Car tu diras le chant des fastes

Si tu dis ton intime émoi :

Il n'est pas de fatals désastres,

Toute la défaite est en toi.

Quant à Stuart Merrill ses "Poings à la Porte" nous intéressent presque autant que "le Corbeau." Le refrain: "Entends-tu tous ces poings qui frappent à la porte?" nous impressionne tout autant que le "nevermore" de Poe: Ce sont peut-être des amis qui frappent, mais le poète n'ouvre pas à la joie futile, lui qui veille seul parmi les esclaves du sommeil; ce sont peut-être des vagabonds, rôdant de male sorte, pieds nus dans leurs sabots, cou-teau clair au poing.

Ils viennent quémander, quand le soleil est loin,
La miche de pain rassis et le pichet de vin sur
A la femme furtive et au vieillard lourd
Qui écoutent, sans oser crier au secours,
Leur haleine qui souffle au trou de la serrure.
Si ce sont eux je rallumerai la lampe du foyer
Pour que s'y chauffent les pauvres que per-
sonne n'a choyés.

C'est peut-être Celui qui vient vêtu de blanc,
et quit fait dans la nuit le geste immense du
pardon. Le poète alors prendra le bâton de
voyage et suivra le Rédempteur vers des

destinées meilleures. "Entends-tu tous ces poings qui frappent à la porte?"

Je ne sais si l'on ne pourrait dire qu'Edmond Rostand lui-même n'a pas pensé parfois à Poe, lorsqu'il écrivait son fier "Cyrano," où l'on voit un tel culte pour l'idéal, pour la beauté artistique, malgré le physique grotesque du héros. Xavier Privas, Albert Samain, Camille Mauclair, Charles Morice, Léo Larquier, doivent beaucoup à Baudelaire et à Mallarmé et, par conséquent, à Poe. Paul Fort a certainement imité notre poète dans sa ballade, "Cette Fille, elle est morte," où nous voyons le *repetend* si cher à Poe, la répétition et le parallélisme si bien décrits par M. le Dr. C. Alphonso Smith:

Cette fille, elle est morte, est morte dans ses
amours.

Ils l'ont portée en terre, en terre au point du
jour.

Ils l'ont couchée toute seule, toute seule en ses
atours.

Ils sont rev' nus gaîment; gaîment avec le
jour

Ils ont chanté gaîment, gaîment: Chacun
son tour.

Cette fille, elle est morte, est morte dans ses
amours.

Ils sont allés aux champs, aux champs comme
tous les jours.

Georges Marlow, Belge comme Maeterlinck et Verhaeren, a donné de la poésie une définition que n'eût pas désavouée Poe: "La poésie? Un peu de fumée qui s'élève de l'âme embrasée et qui parfois, entremêlée de rayons d'étoile, se concrète en auréole autour de l'âme qui s'éteint."

Terminons nos citations des poètes français par le sonnet de Mallarmé:

LE TOMBEAU D'EDGAR POE

Tel qu'en Lui-même enfin l'éternité le change.

Le Poète suscite avec un glaive nu

Son siècle épouvanté de n'avoir pas connu
Que la mort triomphait dans cette voix
étrange!

Eux, comme un vil sursaut d'hydre oyant jadis
l'ange

Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la
tribu,

Proclamèrent très haut du sortilège bu
Dans le flot sans honneur de quelque noir
mélange.

Du sol et de la nue hostiles, ô grief!
Si notre idée avec ne sculpte un bas-relief
Dont la tombe de Poe éblouissante s'orne,

Calme bloc ici-bas chu d'un désastre obscur,
Que ce granit du moins montre à jamais sa
borne
Aux noirs vols du Blasphème épars dans le
futur.

Les vers français, inspirés par notre grand
poète, sont généralement fort beaux, mais je
doute qu'ils égalent le merveilleux "Corbeau,"
même traduit en prose, tel que nous le lisons
dans le livre de M. Lauvrière. Quelle fin ad-
mirable du poème, que les lignes suivantes:

Prophète! dis-je, être de malheur! oiseau
ou démon, toujours prophète,
Par le ciel qui se déploie au-dessus de nos
têtes, par ce Dieu que tous deux nous
adorons,

Dis à cette âme de chagrin chargée si dans
l'Éden lointain,
Elle doit étreindre une vierge sainte que les
anges nomment Lénore,
Étreindre une rare et radieuse vierge que les
anges nomment Lénore.
Le Corbeau dit : "Jamais plus."

Que cette parole soit le signal de notre séparation,
oiseau ou démon ! hurlai-je en
me dressant,
Rentre dans la tempête, retourne au rivage
plutonien de la nuit ;
Ne laisse pas de plume noire en gage du mensonge
qu'a proféré ton âme ;
Laisse inviolée ma solitude ! quitte ce buste
au-dessus de ma porte !
Le Corbeau dit : "Jamais plus !"

Mais le Corbeau, sans broncher, siège encore,
siège toujours,
Sur le pâle buste de Pallas juste au-dessus de
la porte de ma chambre,
Et ses yeux ont toute la semblance de ceux
d'un démon qui rêve,

Et la lueur de la lampe ruisselant sur lui,
 projette son ombre sur le plancher,
Et mon âme, hors de cette ombre qui gît,
 flottante, sur le plancher,
 Ne s'élèvera plus !

Je remercie les membres du Comité du Centenaire qui m'ont fait l'honneur de m'inviter à parler ici en français. Je vous remercie, mesdames et messieurs, de votre bienveillante attention. Cela me fait le plus grand plaisir de me retrouver ici, à cette Université, où, comme Poe, j'ai été moi-même étudiant. Mon séjour ici a été bien court, mais il a laissé sur mon esprit et sur mon âme des traces ineffaçables. Je puis dire de mes années de jeunesse : "Jamais plus," mais le souvenir que j'ai conservé de l'Université de la Virginie est aussi immuable que le "Corbeau qui, sans broncher, siège encore, siège toujours sur le pâle buste de Pallas."

The Chairman, Dr. Kent:

Within recent years much attention has been given to the influence of Hoffman on Edgar Allan Poe, and the reciprocal influence of Poe on the German writers of imaginative prose and more especially upon the modern school of German poets. We were very fortunate in finding in our own country a talented young German fresh from the companionship of these modern poets and thoroughly in touch with the present literary movement of the Fatherland. It will be his province to tell you how far this influence of Poe has extended and to bring to you the greetings of the German nation on this the centennial anniversary of the birth of our great alumnus. I have the privilege, ladies and gentlemen, of presenting Dr. Georg Edward, recently of Germany, at present a member of the faculty of Northwestern University.

Doctor Edward, speaking of Poe in Germany, said:

The purpose of my brief address is to recall to memory the tribute which German literature, and, accordingly, the German people

as a whole, has rendered and is still rendering to the genius whose hundredth birthday we are celebrating at this time. It will be necessary, in the very first place, to glance back at the way in which Poe gradually became well-known in Germany, then to attempt to answer the question why at the present time, sixty years after the poet's death, the temperament of precisely this American author is felt to be specifically modern by a European nation; why it is that we behold in him a man of letters who was far in advance of his own times, and who, accordingly, must be said to belong to no earlier age than our own.

Poe's relations to German literature, and the relations of German literature to Poe, are both varied and manifold. The influence of Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann upon the author of the "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque" has been but recently investigated in detail by Professors Gruener and Cobb. It is my purpose merely to show how highly prized Poe is in Germany, and why he is regarded there as the typical and characteristic American author. That the Germans have occupied themselves with him continuously

and minutely is, perhaps, not an occasion for especial comment. Germany is the very home of what Goethe called "Cosmopolitan literature" (*Weltliteratur*). There exists in Germany an almost marvelous familiarity with the literature of other nationalities, and it is not at all an exaggeration to maintain that there is scarcely any important poet or writer in the whole world, who has not been treated "*historisch-kritisch*" by some German scholar. Furthermore, there has been an endless number of translations of foreign works, and even poets and authors of very moderate ability have often enjoyed a renaissance in the German tongue. This broadly-flowing stream of translations, which the peculiar elasticity and adaptability of the German language have made so possible, has brought it to pass that the German nation, not merely in professional literary circles, but in the general group of cultured people, is so largely acquainted with the literature of other lands. It is on account of this fact that the Germans have also acquired the ability to recognize what is specifically and characteristically national in the literature of other peoples; in other words, the

Germans have developed a very discriminating sense of what is specifically English in an English writer, Russian in a Russian, French in a Frenchman, or American in an American. That which Goethe once affirmed concerning French poetry and French literature, namely, that it could not possibly be detached for one moment from the life and the emotion of the whole nation, is none the less true of every nation's poetry and literature. And so it comes to pass that the intimate acquaintance with various foreign literatures which the German people possesses, leads to a feeling for the national individuality of an author, and the more highly this quality is exhibited by a writer, the more is he valued in Germany, if only, at the same time, his art gives evidence of a certain international spirit. In the light of these assertions, the fact that the Germans regard Poe as a most prominent American writer, nay, in general, as the greatest of American authors, assumes an unusual significance.

Poe's naturalization has taken place more slowly in Germany than in France. He has, to be sure, never enlisted the services of any

German Baudelaire or Mallarmé as interpreter, but, on the other hand, very important authors and historians of literature have been his advocates, and his "Raven," at least, has found a number of first-rate translators. In the period from 1855 to the present day, there have appeared three English editions of his works in Leipsic, as well as a large number of editions of various "Tales" for the use of schools. The first translation of his short stories appeared in two volumes in Leipsic from 1855 to 1858, and to these have been added thirteen further translations by most varied authors, under the imprint of all sorts of publishers. A selected translation of his "Poetical Works" has appeared but once, namely, that of Hedwig Lachmann, published in 1891, but we encounter separate translations of separate poems scattered through the pages of many journals, and "The Raven" has been adapted to the mother-tongue of the Germans—with greater or less felicity—some dozen times. It is worthy of especial remark that the best translation, that by Eduard Mauthner, appeared (along with Coppée's "The Smiths' Strike") in the so-called "New Theatrical Library of Vienna," and has gone

through three editions, the last in 1894; in this transmigration "The Raven" has for a long time belonged to the repertoire of the "show pieces" of elocutionists, and of those actors who occasionally make a public appearance as reciters. Naturally enough, the "Tales" have appeared in many editions, and I think it is not without significance that they have been taken up by all the "Popular Libraries," such as those of Reclam, Hendel, Cotta, Spemann, and Meyer. It is only within the last seven years that a complete German edition of Poe's Tales and Poems has appeared, with an excellent introduction by the editor: the ten volumes constituting "Poe's Werke," by Hedda and Arthur Moeller-Bruck, which, taken as a unit, must be counted as the most important contribution which has been made to Poe's memory in Germany up to the present time. The only features of this edition which we should characterize as inadequate (and in fact far inferior to other similar attempts) are the selected poems in the translation by Hedwig Lachmann, already mentioned, and the now-superseded, though meritorious, "Memoir" of Ingram, which precedes the first volume.

The translations and discussions of Poe, which have appeared in Germany, cannot compare, either in their extent or in their influence, with similar contributions which have been made in France. For thirteen German translations of Poe's Tales in Germany, we have no less than nineteen in France; for one collection of selected poems in Germany, four complete translations in France; for one complete edition of the works in Germany, two such in France. But in spite of the fact that French literature occupied itself with Poe at an earlier date than did the Germans, it need not be assumed that Poe found an entrance into Germany by way of France. It is only in the most recent years that German interest in Baudelaire has breathed new life into the interest for Poe; only at the present day has Poe come to be recognized as a thoroughly modern author. Germany made the acquaintance of Poe quite as early as did France, but there has never been found any person among us who made the American poet such an object of religious adoration as did Baudelaire (the German character is

very chary about going to quite such lengths as this!) or who, like Théophile Gautier, discovered in him something the like of which the world had never before beheld, an intellectual beverage which reminds him of "those strange American drinks, compounded of fizzing, prickling soda-water, and ice, and every conceivable sort of exotic alcoholic ingredient."

The estimation of Poe in Germany came to pass unostentatiously, but has held its own consistently. The first thorough discussion of the poet I find in Herrig's "Hand-Book of North American National Literature for the year 1854," a work of very little authority on its own account, which nevertheless, in spite of mistaken opinions and defective information (it speaks of "Ulalume" and "Annabel Lee," for instance, as "writings"), speaks out clearly and concisely the certain conviction: "Poe left behind him a name which is bound to live in the annals of American literature." Poe's actual introduction to Germany was due to that eminent novelist and author, who has in other respects largely contributed to our

knowledge of America by the democratic spirit of his writings—I mean Friedrich Spielhagen. It was in 1860 that Spielhagen published in the journal “Europa” a thorough-going study of our poet, whom he calls the greatest lyric singer that America has produced; furthermore, he occupied himself in 1883 with an essay of considerable length treating somewhat exhaustively the contest between Poe and Longfellow on the matter of plagiarism, and, in addition, he had already published a translation of a number of Poe’s poems in the year 1858. Two years before that time Adolf Strodtmann had published similar translations in his “Song- and Ballad-Book of American and English Poets,” to which he added in 1870 his widely-circulated “American Anthology,” a work which besides “The Masque of the Red Death” contained “The Raven,” “Annabel Lee,” and “The Bells” in very good translations, and in this manner made these poems at once famous throughout all Germany. Of no less importance is the attitude assumed toward Poe by the historians of literature: Adolf Stern in his

"History of Recent Literature," Eduard Engel in his "History of North American Literature," and Carl Bleibtreu in his "History of English Literature" have been especially influential in preparing the way for an appreciation of Poe in Germany. The most important undertaking, one moreover that is fully modern in all its tendency, is the already-mentioned translation of Poe's works in ten volumes edited by Arthur Moeller-Bruck, and which has been completed within the past year. With the exception of two tales, which could not be translated, it contains all the stories of this class, and, in addition (for the first time in Germany), "Eureka." Moeller-Bruck has contributed on his own account a valuable essay on "Poe's Creative Activities," which, in general, does full justice to Poe's temperament; in a few places only (he appears to be entirely unacquainted with the latest literature of the subject, and more particularly with Professor Harrison's edition) are his results unsatisfactory. The basis of his work still continues to be the "Memoir" of Ingram, the Edinburg edition of which is the foundation of the German work.

It would carry us too far if I were to discuss the numberless essays on Poe which have appeared in the leading German periodicals. At best I could only give a barren resumé of their contents, and therewith I should surely overstep the bounds of time which have been set for my address. From the tenor of these articles, however, it is easy to discover how we have gradually come to the conclusion in Germany that Poe is to be regarded as a thoroughly modern author, and as the most characteristic American poet. In order to understand this one must call to mind the evolution which German literature has gone through in the last twenty years. Apart from those circles which are required *ex officio* to concern themselves with German literature, we find among English-speaking people a very incomplete, not to say a comical conception of what the Germans have accomplished in this field. German character is assuredly not over-easy to understand, while its literature, which is the expression of this character, is still more complicated in its nature. Here in America, where people

are decidedly prone to generalizations, German literature is described either as heavy, brooding, and tasteless, or it is given (by a very short process) the general label of "decadent." One of these estimates is precisely as fatuous as the other. At present we have to concern ourselves only with the second, however: the expression "decadent" belongs to the repertory of those who have to characterize the "modern." German literature has undergone great transformations in the last thirty years, just as German philosophy, German music, and German art have done. After having disposed of "consistent naturalism," or perhaps as a reaction against it, there has appeared an unmistakable new era of German psychological development: after sensitiveness, romance, the "second generation," realism, and naturalism, comes a new species of impressionism, Nervosity. Almost simultaneously it has influenced the entire art, literature, and music of the western European continent. It cannot be denied that there is a certain element of morbidity in all this, but severe psychological struggles (and those struggles did precede

the recent art-movement) never manifest themselves without some pathological symptoms. Underneath the hard pressure of the Art of the Actual there has been a quest for new methods of expression for the infinitely subtle variations of feeling which come surging in upon the modern individual, and there has been a discovery of new sensations, which are rooted in the nervous system. I need only to call to mind the music of Liszt and Wagner, who have attempted to give expression to everything inexpressible that lies concealed in the innermost depths of our souls, or the painting of Böcklin and Klinger, who have conducted us into a new world of tones and color-impressions—who have rendered the finest shadings of emotion in a way which could not have been expressed at an earlier time. And it is toward this goal that the modern literature of western Europe is also striving: the new times have brought new shades of emotion, and the new shades of emotion have demanded new methods of expression, and new sensations. It is altogether indifferent whether we call modern literature symbolistic, impressionistic,

mystical, or flatly "decadent": the one thing which underlies all these tendencies is the striving after something new, something remote and strange. But in all this "decadent" literature we have not to deal with nervous prostration, or nervous irritation, or even with the moral corruption of modern city-life, but a revolt of the individual against the mediocrity, the dead-level of Philistinism,—a battle with materialism, with the age of machinery, the prosy morality of mere utilitarianism and the struggle for existence.

And how is it in regard to the "Pilgrim of Sorrow," as Professor Harrison has named him, him whose memory we recall today with veneration and love, with a feeling of tender regret? Perhaps in his case there was not so clear a feeling as with the poets of today that he was groping after new sensations, in order to give expression to the emotions which dominated his psychical existence. But, consciously or unconsciously, certain it is that he stands at the gateway of the New Art, the art of modern humanity, as it comes to meet us at the close of the

last century. Poe was seeking for the new world of actualities,—the very fact that in a portion of his works he recoils so sensitively from the surrounding unsympathetic world of actuality is proof enough of this. He made a quest for a means of expression for that which moved his inner soul, and the forms of expression which sufficed for his contemporaries were no longer adequate for him. In his significant introduction to Poe's poems, Professor Kent has indicated how rarely the poet was able to fully express what hovered before the eyes of his imagination, how "his conceptions were at times far beyond his own powers of expression," as "much that was written is not understood, since with ears we do not hear, and with eyes we do not see, for both music and vision are for those of poetic temperament and artistic gift." How far was Poe, in this respect, in advance of his age! Since the time when he wrote his melodious lines, our feeling for the musical values of language has become more and more developed and refined, more and more has lyric poetry come nearer to the domain of music. The

very thing which our American poet, so sensitive for the tonal effects of his verses, strove for, many years ago (as is proven by the frequent variants in the different texts of his poems), the modern verse-technic is striving today to attain, more earnestly than ever before. As early as 1900 the Austrian writer Rudolf Kassner pointed out, in his book "Mysticism, Artists, and Life," Poe's high endowment for music. He calls him a psychologist of the most painful nicety of apprehension, a mystagogue full of intoxicating rhythm, self-indulgent and yielding, a reveler and an adorer of angels, sarcastic and moody, a comedian and a fatalist. Dante and Poe—one is startled at seeing these two names side by side—had one thing in common (according to our writer): the necessity of having faith,—Dante because of the wealth, and Poe because of the poverty of his endowment of conscience. Dante believed in Heaven and Hell, Poe in the continuation of life in the grave, and his theology was mesmerism compounded with cryptography. He, too, had his Beatrice, whom he celebrated in song quite as subtly as

did the immortal Florentine. But *one* thing he possessed, of which Dante had no suspicion:—music. It was his divinity, even when he was least conscious of it. “And what did Virginia Clemm mean for the art of Poe? Perhaps at the very moment in his life when he was most faithful to her, he was rapt away by his divinity, Music.” That is the music which every modern poet and artist carries about in his soul, those are the “words ineffable” which in vain strive to make their way out into the light of day, and which in the end cause the heart to consume away upon itself. “Who are these Helens, Lenores, Ulalumes,” asks Kassner once again, “these ghostly beings with violet eyes and tremulous lids? His art is not able to tell us that. These maidens appear at the beginning and end of his dreams,—so much art is able to tell. They conduct him into enchanted gardens, where enamored roses languish in the moonlight; they row him in swart craft to the enchanted islands, and the waves die away upon the shore like yearning after enjoyment; they lead him to the castles of death, which, wind-forsaken

and immersed in eternal night, loom from the livid waters of a languid sea; they speak out of graves and point up to the stars. Though they appear at the beginning and at the end, as the first and last star of the night of dreams, nevertheless the dream has whelmed them up. *This* is the art of Edgar Allan Poe!"

That which gives so strong a sense of modernity in Poe is not the fact that he led the life of a dreamer, that he himself had the consciousness of being "no book whose meaning has been completely fathomed," to speak with Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, but "a man with his own contradiction." He himself gives expression to this conviction when he defends himself (in the preface to his "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque") against the charge of "Germanism," and cries out: "Let us admit, for the moment, that the 'phantasy-pieces' now given *are* Germanic, or what not. Then Germanism is 'the vein' for the time being. Tomorrow I may be anything but German, as yesterday I was everything else." And that he was, most assuredly: subjected to the never-ending

changes of the moods of his spirit. And in the tales and writings which he has left behind him this multifariousness of his artistic and literary temperament comes to clearest expression. He who wrote most melodious stanzas, and who had the utmost horror of crass actuality, he it was who possessed the knowledge or the presentiment of our modern actuality: one has merely to recall his criminal stories, or his modern types which remind us of similar creations in the writings of Dostojewski, or the delineation of *milicus*, as in "The Man of the Crowd" which recall impressions in the novels of Zola. And alongside of these stand those tales, the fancies of his dreams, with which he transfigured and beautified life, those creations which sprang from his vague visions, in which he seems to us a visionary or an idealist,—as in his Eureka-song. Ethical principles, which he should be bound to champion, concerned him not—he has no questions to put about the goals of humanity, nothing about its future—but he possesses that idealism which has fullest faith in the greatness, the purity, and the

depth of human feelings, and which has called into being creations which alone represent these feelings:—William Wilson and Roderick Usher and Eleanora, Ligeia, Berenice and Morella. And then his fondness for the horrible, the malicious. One has instinctively the feeling that Poe's soul-life must have been that of the criminal, as though it gave him unspeakable pleasure to penetrate into the very depths of criminality, to experience its very sensations and to follow out the whole course of its origin. Such a state of mind is one which is only too frequently encountered in daily life, but the exceptional thing about Poe is precisely this, that he, as poet, is obsessed by this mania, and holds fast to it in his writings. Poe is the first of that long list of modern authors—Krafft-Ebing, Lombroso, Dostojewski, Nietzsche and Bourget—who trace back the evil element in man, and consequently his criminality and wickedness, to an abnormal mental condition.

And so Poe appears in the category of those poets and authors to whom German literary research has given the attribute "modern."

One further reason why Germany gives him so high a place is, perhaps, that we stand there in a neutral attitude toward the uninviting side of his character, his unsparing sarcasm, the provocative element in his nature which made enemies out of his friends. In the older world, where we can look back upon generations of artists, authors, and musicians, one is only too well aware of the fact that those persons who have been humanity's richest spiritual benefactors were often, in actual life, anything but model citizens and blameless toilers. One recognizes, for more reasons than need to be specified, that people cannot be estimated by set rules, and that literature, as well, must reflect both the good and the bad, for life is made up of both, and both keep the world moving. We are only too well aware in Germany how prone Americans are to lay down inflexible rules to which even the poet must bend himself. As early as in Eduard Engel's "History of North American Literature," in which Poe is called "an exceptional phenomenon for both British and American authorship," we encounter the undisguised satire: "The life of all the other

important American authors passes by smoothly; they grow old in honor and abundance, they play the part of literary patriarchs with dignity, and show that authorship in America is as brilliant and lucrative a career as boring for petroleum or building railroads." Is it hard to understand why Poe, finely-organized and aristocratic, who did not possess the force of character to protect his sensibilities against the commonalties of daily life, became ever more and more embittered? Why he paid back the humiliations which he had to endure anew every day of his life, with that sarcasm, that unsparing onslaught on the mediocrity which shut him in from every side? Was he not, in fact, a dreamer out of ancient, half-romantic Europe, who was altogether out of place in the brutally realistic *milieu* of the new world? Call to mind his sensitive temperament, his refined conception of poetic art and literature, and realize that he was fated to do his singing to an age in which the first railroads cut their way across the country, in which the telegraph made the conquest of the world, and steamships and factories darkened the sunlight! Poe's fierce irritability towards

the life which surrounded him, and to which he felt himself superior, gave itself breathing-space in those criticisms which made the whole world his enemy, and plunged him into that deep, incurable melancholy which makes the theme of his "Raven" and of all his poems: the plaint of a heart which is dragged down from the highest heights of enthusiasm for the true and the beautiful into the mire of sordid vulgarity.

And if the Germans, who cultivate cosmopolitan literature, are prone to seek for the national trait in every author, they have also found this in Poe. The very earliest critics called him "the most original spirit in American literature;" a nature "in which the leaning toward the freakish, melancholy, mysterious and awesome coincides with the sense of verity, the realistic acumen of the Yankee." But it is only the most recent criticism which finds in Poe the characteristic American poet, the greatest American poet; one of the arguments in favor of this view is not precisely flattering, but the proof is mathematical in its logicalness: every poet, who truly bore the arms of his calling, has come into conflict

with actuality, but few have been victorious in this struggle, and none has ever emerged from it without sore wounds. Is it not therefore logically inevitable that any true poet who should come into contact with the American life which encounters him in the larger northern cities with a materialism bordering upon brutality, must go to destruction under these influences? An American poet was in the nature of things an impossibility: he could never survive. But there *have* been attempts to treat the matter less superficially. In the contemporaries of Poe—such as Longfellow, Lowell, Emerson and Whittier—one has recognized, not American poets, but merely those who have continued English literature upon American soil.

In Poe, on the other hand, one recognizes an artist who understood American life as none other had done, who recognized its criminal tendencies long before they had reached their climax, and who comprehended, decades in advance, what an evolution the American spirit was destined to undergo in the field of inventions and discoveries. To be sure, Poe was interested merely in the physiological, or rather the pathological side of the American

temperament, but the one-sidedness of his entire being is itself a part of the American nature. He is thoroughly American, even when, compelled to write tales merely in order to secure the barest necessities of life, he is bound to continually invent what is new, and in being able to show interest and curiosity where his heart was not directly engaged. Curiosity is certainly a most prominent trait in American life, or *interest*, if the other term seem offensive. Poe's interest was directed toward the most strange and odd mysteries, and yet he refused to concern himself with things which were ready and finished. All that was incomplete, unsolved, unexplained, challenged him to pursuit; he was bound to complete it with his imagination; and so he has told of mysterious secret documents, of inexplicable crimes and discoveries, so he has tracked out the possibilities of mesmerism, the prospects of ærial navigation—such themes as these appealed to his interest. But when such things became realized, they became totally indifferent to him: he had to discover new possibilities which should excite his curiosity.

And yet, even to the last, he never parted company with his own self—he remained the

artist that he was in the beginning, the pilgrim, who with bleeding heart is still searching for the land of undiscovered beauty. So Spielhagen greets him and pays him homage: "Unfortunate, fortunate man! for, confess it, thou hast beheld her, the fairest, the loftiest, in those rare, unspeakable moments: and she has kissed thee, but in passing, as she kisses mortals; but thy soul was filled with the echo of those kisses; and this rapture thou, starving one, wouldst not have bartered for all the gold of Ormuzd; thou, the greedy for fame, wouldst not have sold it for all the glory and renown and honor of those who, in thine eyes, were no priests at all, who counted themselves as priests only because the world counted them such!"

And in this hour, in which we pay our homage to the poet, the artist, the author, I, too, would bring to him at least one tribute from across the sea—a tribute which sprang from genuine enthusiasm, and which, however insignificant it may appear, gives its testimony as to how widespread is the knowledge of Poe in Germany, how deep the respect. I myself belonged, at a very youthful age, to a literary group which included Poe among

its objects of study, out of pure love for the theme: we were then scarcely fifteen-year-old schoolboys, but we had the genuine reverence for the great and the beautiful which had not yet been weakened or overcast by any of the bitter experiences of life. We also tried our hand at translating Poe's poems into our mother-tongue, and out of these efforts one translation emerged which for its simple, melodious beauty surpasses anything which I have encountered in these last days while busied in preparation for this Commemoration. It is the touching poem "To My Mother," and the translator, of whom I have lost all traces for many years, was called Friedrich Kraft:—

Weil ich empfinde, dass der Engel Heer,
 Das flüsternd sich begrüsst im Himmelreiche,
 Kein Wörtlein findet, sucht es noch so sehr,
 Das dem erhabnen einen "Mutter" gleiche,
 Drum muss ich dir den teuren Namen geben,
 Die du mir mehr als eine Mutter bist—
 In dir allein noch find' ich Kraft zum Leben,
 Jetzt da Virginia mir entrissen ist.
 Die Mutter—meine Mutter, die gestorben—
 War nur die Mutter meiner selbst, doch du
 Gebarst mir die, die ich zum Weib, erworben,
 Und die ich liebe sonder Rast und Ruh,
 So viel mal sie mir teurer als mein Ich,
 So viel mal mehr verehr' und lieb' ich dich!

VI

IN CABELL HALL, AGAIN

THE final exercises of the Commemoration took place in Cabell Hall Tuesday evening, January 19. President Alderman welcomed the audience:

We are met again on this evening of the Centenary of his birth to honor the memory and to study the life and work of Edgar Allan Poe, a man of genius, who, for a brief period, studied within the halls of this University. The task of appraising the value to the world of Poe, the poet and the man of letters, has been assigned by our committee to the two scholars who have already discharged their duties so ably and thoughtfully this morning, and to two other scholars whom I shall shortly have the honor to introduce to you, Professor Barrett Wendell, of Harvard University, who will speak to you upon "The Nationalism of

Poe," and Professor Alphonso Smith, of North Carolina, who will speak upon the "Americanism of Poe." All Americans look up to Harvard University with reverence and respect, especially at this moment when the most venerable of our institutions is passing into a new epoch of its vigorous life, and I shall be pardoned, I am sure, for a feeling for the University of North Carolina as close and warm as a son may bear.

It is in no sense my task to discuss in a critical way Edgar Allan Poe. I may, however, with propriety utter a simple, intimate word, expressing for him the tenderness and affection which this University has always borne for him, as well in the days of his waywardness and eclipse, as in this time, when the star of his fame has climbed to the zenith and is shining there with intense and settled glory. There is nothing finer in the world than the love that men bear for institutions, unless it be the solemn pride which institutions display in men who have partaken of their benefits. Celebrations similar to this have been held to-day in London and in five American

cities—New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond and Boston.

“Seven cities claimed the birth of Homer dead
Through which the living Homer begged his
bread.”

That experience of the elder world is repeated to-day save that the number of cities is five instead of seven through which the living Poë suffered and struggled. It is the same old story, too, of outward defeat and apparent oblivion, and yet of inward victory and a sure grasping of enduring fame. I may be frank and say that there was a time when Poe did not greatly appeal to me. I felt the sheer, clear beauty of his song, indeed, as one might feel the beauty of the lark's song, but his detachment from the world of men, where my interests most centered, left me unresponsive and simply curious. The great name of poet had held place in my thinking as signifying a prophet, or as a maker of divine music for men to march by towards serener heights. My notion of the poet came down to me out of the Hebraic training that all of our consciences

receive; and Poe did not fit into this conception. I have come, however, to see the limitations of that view, and to behold something very admirable and strange and wonderful in this proud, gifted man, who loved beauty and mystery, who had such genius for feeling the pain of life and the wonder of it, who grasped so vainly at its peace and calm, and who suffered, one feels, a thousand deaths under its disciplines and conventions. To me the glory of Poe as a man is that, though whipped and scourged by human frailties, he was able to keep his heart and vision unstained and to hold true to the finest thing in him, so that out of this fidelity to his very best there issued immortal work. World poets like world conquerors are very rare. Not many universities have had the fortune to shelter a world poet, and to offer him any nourishment. Christ College, at Cambridge, has warmed itself at the fire of Milton's genius for three hundred years. In our own young land, with its short intellectual annals, Williams College sheltered Bryant for a while; and Virginia, Poe; and Harvard, Emerson, Lowell, and Holmes; Bowdoin, Longfellow; and Oglethorpe, a little

college in Georgia, that other child of genius and misfortune, Sidney Lanier. We might say, therefore, that only four out of the four hundred American colleges have sheltered great poets, and perhaps only two, poets of world-wide fame, and perhaps only one, a world artist. Not such a poet as Sophocles or Virgil or Dante or Shakespeare have we nourished here, to be sure, but a world poet in a legitimate and classic sense. In many of these colleges minor poets have appeared, who have sung truly and clearly, like our own Thompson, and Lucas, and Page, and Lindsay Gordon and Armistead Gordon. So long is the list of the great singers who knew no college training, and so short the list of those who did, that we may well cherish here our high privileges in the fame of Poe. I have often wondered just what the University of Virginia did for Poe in that short year of his life here. He makes no mention of the University in his writings, but that is like him and his detachment from time and place. He saw the University when it was young. He must have heard much talk about him of the dreams and hopes for the new institution

founded here on the western borders of the young republic by the statesman whose renown then filled the world. The great philosopher of democracy and the great classic artist must have often passed each other on the Lawn and doubtless often held speech with each other, little dreaming that each would share with the other the widest fame to be accorded to the thousands who would hereafter throng these halls. It is probably true that "Annabel Lee" and the "Ode to Helen" would have sung themselves out of Poe's heart and throat if he had never seen the University of Virginia; but surely there was genuine inspiration in the place in that time of its dim beginnings. There were noble books here, few in number and great in quality. Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, and the great Greeks were all here; sincere scholars from the old world and the new had set up their homes here. Here were unbeaten youths with young hearts and passions; here hopes gleamed and ambitions burned. And then, as now, beauty dwelt upon the venerable hills encircling the horizon, and the University itself lay new and chaste in its simple lines upon the young Lawn. I venture

to think sometimes that when our poet wrote those stateliest lines of his—

To the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome—

perhaps there flashed into his mind's eye the vision of the Rotunda upon some such night as this, with its soaring columns whitened by the starlight and vying with the beauty and witchery of the white winter about it.

It is perhaps easier to answer the question, What has Poe done for the University? We hear much of endowments in connection with universities. The words donor and endowment are the technical phrases of college administration baffling and alluring the builders of universities. Poe has endowed his *alma mater* with immortal distinction, and left it a legacy which will increase with the years. This legacy is not endowment of money, for there was no scrip left in his poor purse, but simply the endowment of a few songs and a fund of unconquerable idealism. I am not of those who believe that Poe has been to our young men a kind of star that has lighted them to their destruction, as some good

Presbyterians believe Burns to have been to the youth of Scotland. The vast tragedy of his life, its essential purity, its hard work, the unspeakable pity of it, have kept his name a name of dignity and the suggestions of his career to modern youth are suggestions of beauty and of labor. Let us concede that he was no exemplar or pattern of correct living to whom we can point our youth, but the fact that there is a little room on West Range in which dwelt a world poet who never wrote an unclean word, and who sought after beauty in form as passionately as a coarse man might seek after gain, has contributed an irreducible total of good to the spirit which men breathe here, as well as a wide fame to his *alma mater* that will outlive all ill-fortune, change, or disaster. May I call this spiritual residuum a clear tradition of beauty and poetic understanding, a feeling for the gold and not the dross in life, a genius for reverence, an instinct for honor, and an eye to see, burning brightly, the great realities that are wont to pale and disappear before the light of common day?

Poems contributed for the occasion were read. The following, by Robert Burns Wilson, entitled "Genius," was "inscribed with great admiration and esteem to Dr. Charles W. Kent:"

Not in the courts of kings alone
Are found life's princes of the blood:
They rise and reign where field and flood
Know not the temple nor the throne.

From some unnoted, silent dawn
Their souls receive the golden dower;
And conscious of their spirit's power
They put the crimson mantle on.

Across the desert of their days
They look with fixed imperious eyes
And on some sky, beyond the skies,
They bend the soul's untiring gaze.

In that far, undistracted bourne,
They build the kingdom of the mind:
And there—unvexed by Fate's ill wind,—
They rule unmoved—in might unshorn.

The sculptured glory of that dream
Through all the echoing courts they know:
The domes—the palaces of snow—
The bastioned walls that glow and gleam.

The clouded-mighty arches ring
With music and the mingling call
Of trumpets and, above them all,
The cry—*The King!—It is the King!!*

Far-faded from their fancy's ken
The fashion of the world's regard;
Alike to them the wounding shard,
The censure and the praise of men.

The small mind's hate—the world's disdain,
The fool's forlorn felicity:—
The masked and mocking mimicry—
All menace, their set minds make vain.

Yet from a race which cannot fail,
The torch, instinctively, they bear;
Their destined course they keep—they dare
Some new and untried sea to sail.

Creative, undisturbed, they see
The super-truth in Beauty's mold;
In form—the soul, in clay—the gold,
Not man's day, but eternity.

Across the desert of their days
The never-ceasing voices call;
They do not fear nor faint nor fall
Nor change their soul's untiring gaze.

Not in the courts of kings alone
Are found life's princes of the blood:
They rise and reign where field and flood,
Know not the temple nor the throne.

Mr. Ben C. Moomaw, of Virginia:

EDGAR ALLAN POE

I

Lo! ever among the bards was he the
wondrous Israfel,
For never to the listening world sang they so
wildly well;
Nor ever in all the earth arose, from lips that
mortal be,
A burst of song so marvelous, a holier
melody!
The soul that soaring sought the sky across
the starlit way
Was not a soul of the sordid earth, whatever
the world may say,—
Was not a sodden soul of the clod, whatever
the clods may say.

II

Vain is the orient vision for eyes that can-
not see,
And silent are the morning stars to ears that
heavy be,
And sweet the song of minstrel to none in all
this earth
Whoso the godlike song shall hold a thing of
little worth;

And silent so for weary years the poet's lyre
has been,
And mute the singing lips to-day amid the
haunts of men
Hushed by the clamor of the earth, by the
clamor of noisy men.

III

Wide are the reaches of the sea, and far the
flight of time,
And many mysteries there be in every earthly
clime,
But not the sea, nor time, nor space, nor
mysteries of men,
Nor soaring height nor darkling depth escape
the searching ken
Of him whose song unearthly, like the splendor
of the sun,
The aureate glory kindleth that makes the
nations one;—
For the joy of love and the sorrow of life,
maketh the whole world one.

IV

For yet his vibrant song was like the sobbing
of the sea,—
The Sea!—the awful glory and the rhythm
of the sea,

Akin in stately measure, to the whirling of
the spheres;
The noble measured marching of innumerable
years
Adown the magic corridors, where mighty
anthems roll,
In the mystic gloom and glory of the elemental
soul,—
The tragic world, and infinite, that centers in
the soul.

V

Alike the choral grandeur in the temple of the
night,—
The thunder of the tempest in the waning of
the light;
The mournful sighing of the wind amid the
wintry wood;
The splendid diapason of the universal
flood;
The threnody of sorrow in the soul that never
dies,—
Thus sang the bard whose lyre rang the
anthems of the skies,
And showered on a listening world the starry
melodies.

VI

Afar the centuries may wing their never resting flight,
Empires arise, and vanish then in an eternal night,
While be the annals of the race to joy or sorrow given,
While yet we borrow love of life, or hope of bounteous heaven,
So shall his fame enduring be, a coronal sublime;
A burst of cosmic light upon the skies of every clime;
A path of dazzling splendor to the far off bounds of time.

VII

Oh ye who zealous are to blame the weakness of the man,
Who virtuous, blaze to all the world your unrelenting ban,
Aye, doubtless are ye without guilt to hurl the sinless stone,
And crush a quivering heart. But stay, it is not nobly done,
For if there be—or much there be—that we have not forgiven,

Remember that the sternest tongue is shamed
by silent heaven,—
That e'en a thousand tireless tongues are
hushed by piteous heaven.

VIII

Though Truth is Argus-eyed and stern, pity-
ing Love is blind,
And twain they are in all the world save in
the noblest mind,
But wed they are where angels fare, and lo!
the heavenly song
The breathless skies acclaim to-night, the sing-
ing stars prolong;—
The choral stars,—and lo! a star lost to its
native light
Has lifted songs of beauty amid the Stygian
night,—
Has lifted marvelous melodies out of the
gloomy night.

IX

Thus e'er it was and e'er shall be while earthly
cycles roll,
The sweetest music of the world swells from
the saddest soul;

But since the guard at Eden's gate who held
the glittering sword
Hath sheathed its flaming terrors in the pity
of the Lord,
The luminous soul hath borne afar its golden
argosies
From the moorings of its sorrow to the beauty
of the skies,—
From earthly ports in shadow to the splendor
of the skies.

X

Aye, thus it is that of the bards the wondrous
Israfel
Is he, for never a mortal bard has sung so
wildly well;
Nor ever in all the earth arose from lips that
mortal be,
A burst of song so marvelous, so pure a
melody.
The soaring soul that sought the sky across
the starlit way
Was not a soul of the sordid earth, whatever
the world may say,—
Was not a sodden soul of the clod, whatever
the clods may say.

Dr. Barrett Wendell, of Harvard, speaking on "The Nationalism of Poe," said:

One hundred years ago to-day, Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston. The vital records of that period are scanty and defective. It is only within the past two weeks that my friend, Mr. Walter Watkins, has collected, from the newspapers of 1808 and 1809, notices of all the plays in which the parents of Poe appeared during that season. From them it is clear that Mrs. Poe withdrew from the stage about Christmas time, 1808, and returned only on February 9th, 1809, when one of the newspapers congratulated her on her happy recovery from her confinement. This is apparently the most nearly contemporary record of Poe's birth. The researches of Mr. Watkins did not end here. It had been supposed that all record of Poe's birthplace was lost; and indeed it is improbable that he himself ever knew just where it was. By examining the tax lists for 1808 and 1809, Mr. Watkins discovered that David Poe was taxed that year as resident in a house owned by one Henry Haviland, who had bought the property, a few

years before, from a Mr. Haskins, a kinsman, I believe, of the mother of Ralph Waldo Emerson. The house was pulled down some fifty years ago; but Mr. Watkins has ascertained from the records that it was situated at what is now No. 62 Carver Street. In 1809, this was a respectable, though not a fashionable, part of the city. There Poe was born.

The circumstances of Poe's career were restless; on the whole, they were solitary. Throughout his forty years of mortal sunlight and shadow, he was never quite in accord with his surroundings. He was never tried by either of the tests for which ambition chiefly longs—the gravely happy test of wide responsibility, or the stimulatingly happy test of dominant success. Troublous from beginning to end his earthly life seems; to him, this world could not often have smiled contagiously sympathetic. So much is clear; and yet a little more is clear as well. When he sought sympathy, or found semblance of it, and thus for a little while could feel trouble assuaged, he could find it most nearly among those generous phases of Southern spirit which surrounded the happier years of his

youth. There was little trace of it, for him, in the still half-Puritan atmosphere of that New England where he chanced, a stranger, to see the light.

So it was with deep and reverent sense of your Southern generosity that I received your grave and friendly summons to join with you here and now. Here, in this sanctuary of Virginia tradition, you have not scrupled to call me from the heart of New England, to pay tribute not only for myself, and for my own people, but tribute in the name of us all, to the memory of Poe. If one could only feel sure of performing such a task worthily, no task, of duty or of privilege, could be more solemnly happy. For none could more wonderfully imply how Virginians and the people of New England,—each still themselves,—have so outlived their long spiritual misunderstandings of one another that with all our hearts we can gladly join together, as fellow countrymen, in celebrating the memory of one recognized everywhere as the fellow-countryman of us all.

For everywhere is no hyperbolic word to describe the extent of Poe's constantly extend-

ing fame, sixty years after they laid him in his grave. His name is not only eminent in the literary history of Virginia, or of New York, or of America; it has proved itself among the very few of those native to America which have commanded and have justified admiration throughout the civilized world. Even this does not tell the whole story. So far as we can now discern, he has securely risen above the mists of time and the fogs of accident. His work may appeal to you or leave you deaf; you may adulate it or scrutinize it, as you will; you may dispute as long and as fruitlessly as you please concerning its positive significance or the magnitude of its greatness. The one thing which you cannot do—the thing for which the moment is forever past—is to neglect it. Forever past, as well, all loyal Americans must gladly find the moment,—if indeed there ever was a moment,—when any of us could even for an instant regret it. There is no longer room for any manner of question that the work of Poe is among the still few claims which America can as yet urge unchallenged in proof that our country has enriched the literature of the world. Even

with no other reason than this, loyal Americans must already unite in cherishing his memory.

So true, so obvious, this must seem to-day that we are prone, in accepting it, to forget the marvel of it, as we forget the marvels of Nature,—of sunrise, of sleep, of birth, of memory itself. The marvel of it, in truth, is none the less reverend because, like these, we need never find it miraculous. Happily for us all,—happily for all the world,—Poe is not an isolated, sporadic phenomenon in our national history. He was an American of the nineteenth century. If we ponder never so little on those commonplace words, we shall find them charged with stirring truth. To summarize the life of any nation, there is no better way than to turn to the successive centuries of its history, and to ask yourself, with no delay of slow or painful study, what names and what memories, unborn at the beginning of these epochs, were in enduring existence when they ended. When we thus consider our United States of America, the spiritual splendor of the nineteenth century glows amazing.

That nineteenth century, as we all gravely

know, was by no means a period of national concord. Rather, far and wide, it was a period when the old order was fatally passing, yielding place to new. Thus inevitably, throughout our country, it was a period of honest and noble passion running to the inspiring height of spiritual tragedy. For no tragedy can be more superbly inspiring than that of epochs when earnestly devoted human beings, spiritually at one in loyalty to what they believe the changeless ideals of truth and of righteousness, are torn asunder by outbreaks of such tremendous historic forces as make the mechanical forces of Nature seem only thin parables, imaging the vaster forces still which we vainly fancy to be immaterial. It is not until epochs like this begin to fade and subside into the irrevocable certainty of the past that we can begin to perceive the essential unity of their grandeur. Nothing less than such supreme ordeal of conflict can finally prove the quality and the measure of heroes; and in the stress and strain, no human vision can truly discern them all; but once proved deathless, the heroes stand side by side, immortally brethren. So, by and by, we come

wondrously to perceive that we may honour our own heroes most worthily,—most in the spirit which they truly embodied, most, I believe, as they themselves would finally bid us, if our ears could still catch the accents of their voices,—when we honour with them their brethren who, in the passing years of passion, seemed for a while their foes.

When we of America thus contemplate the nineteenth century, we cannot fail to rejoice in the memories it has left us. They are so many, so full of inspiration, so various in all but the steadfastness with which they withstand the deadening test of the years, that it would be distracting, and even invidious, to call the roll of our heroes at a moment like this. What more truly and deeply concerns us is an evident historical fact, generally true of all the human careers on which our heroic memories of the nineteenth century rest unshaken. Among those careers almost all—North and South, East and West—won, in their own time, distinguished public recognition. What I have in mind we may best realize, perhaps, if for a moment we imagine ourselves in some nineteenth century congregation

of our countrymen, similar to this where we are gathered together. Fancy, for example, the companies assembled to welcome Lafayette, far and wide, during his last visit to our nation, which he had helped call into being. Among the American worthies then in their maturity, and still remembered by others than their own descendants, almost every one would already have been well and widely known. A local stranger in any such assemblage, to whom his host should point out the more distinguished personages then present, would generally have found their names not only memorable but distinguished, just as we should find them still. And what would thus have been the case in 1824 would have stayed so, five and twenty years later. The heroes of our olden time were mostly gladdened by the consciousness of recognized and acknowledged eminence.

Now, in contrast with them, let us try to imagine a figure which might perhaps have attracted the eye in some such American assemblage sixty-five years ago. Glancing about, you might very likely have observed a slight, alert man, with rather lank, dark hair,

and deep, restless eyes. His aspect might hauntingly have attracted you, and set you to wondering whether he was young or old. On the whole you might probably have felt that he looked distrustful, defiant if not almost repellant, certainly not ingratiating, or engagingly sympathetic. Yet there would have hovered about him an impalpable atmosphere of fascination, which would have attracted your gaze back to him again and again; and each new scrutiny would have increased your impression that here was some one solitary, apart, not to be confused with the rest. He would hardly have been among the more distinguished personages, on the platform or at the high table. You might well have wondered whether anybody could tell you his name. And if, in answer to a question, your neighbor had believed that this was Edgar Allan Poe, you might very probably have found the name by no means familiar. You would perhaps have had a general impression that he had written for a good many magazines, and the like,—that he had produced stories, and verses, and criticism, but the chances are that you would not clearly have distinguished him

unless as one of that affluent company of literati who illustrated the '40's, and who are remembered now only because their names occur in essays preserved among Poe's collected works. Almost certainly he would hardly have impressed you as a familiarly memorable personage. His rather inconspicuous solitude would not have seemed noteworthy. Very likely, if you were a stranger thereabouts, you would have paid little more attention to his presence, but would rather have proceeded to inquire who else, of more solid quality, was then and there worth looking at.

All this might well have happened little more than sixty years ago; and though to some of us sixty years may still seem to stretch long, they are far from transcending the period of human memory. It would be by no means remarkable if in this very company, here present, there were some who can remember the year 1845, or the election of President Taylor. Beyond question, every one of us has known, with something like contemporary intimacy, friends and relatives, only a little older than ourselves in seeming, to whom those years remained as vivid as you

shall find the administration of President Roosevelt. That olden time, in fact, when amid such congregations as this, anywhere throughout America, the presence of Poe would hardly have been remarked, has not quite faded from living recollection. And yet, at this moment, there is no need to explain anywhere why we are come together here, from far and wide, to honor his memory. Not only all of us here assembled, not only all Virginia, and all New York, and all New England, and all our American countrymen beside, but the whole civilized world would instantly and eagerly recognize the certainty of his eminence. What he was, while still enmeshed in the perplexity of earthly circumstance, is already become a matter of little else than idle curiosity. What he is admits of no dispute. So long as the name of America shall endure, the name of Poe will persist, in serene certainty, among those of our approved national worthies.

In all our history, I believe, there is no more salient contrast than this between the man in life and his immortal spirit. Just how or when the change came to be we need not

trouble ourselves to dispute. It is enough for us, during this little while when we are together, that we let our thoughts dwell not on the Poe who was but on the Poe who is. And even then we shall do best not to lose ourselves in conjectures concerning his positive magnitude, or his ultimate significance, when you measure his utterances with what we conceive to be absolute truth, or the scheme of the eternities. We should be content if we can begin to assure ourselves of what he is, and of why.

The Poe whom we are met to celebrate is not the man, but his work. Furthermore, it is by no means all the work collected in those volumes where studious people can now trace, with what edification may ensue, the history, the progress, the ebb and the flow, of his copious literary production. His extensive criticism need not detain or distract us; it is mostly concerned with ephemeral matters, forgotten ever since the years when it was written. His philosophical excursions, fantastic or pregnant as the case may finally prove to be, we need hardly notice. The same is true concerning his copious exposition of literary

principle, superficially grave, certainly ingenious, perhaps earnest, perhaps impishly fantastic. All of these, and more too, would inevitably force themselves on our consideration if we were attempting to revive the Poe who was. At this moment, however, we may neglect them as serenely as we may neglect scrutiny of outward and visible signs—such questions as those of where he lived and when and for how long, of what he did in his private life, of whom he made love to and what he ate for dinner, of who cut his waistcoats, and of how—if at all—he paid for them. The very suggestion of such details may well and truly seem beneath the dignity of this moment. They are forced into conscious recognition not by any tinge of inherent value, but because of the innocently intrusive pedantry now seemingly inseparable from the ideal of scholarship. We have passed, for the while, beyond the tyranny of that scholarly mood which used to exhaust its energy in analysis of every word and syllable and letter throughout the range of literature. From sheer reaction, I sometimes think, we are apt nowadays, when concerned with letters, to pass our

time, even less fruitfully than if we were still grammarians, in researches little removed from the impertinence of gossip. And gossip concerning memorable men and women is only a shade less futile than gossip concerning the ephemeral beings who flit across our daily vision. So far as it can keep us awake from superstitious acceptance of superhuman myth, it may perhaps have its own little salutary function. If it distract us from such moods of deeper sympathy as start the vagrant fancies of myth-makers, it does mischief as misleading as any ever wrought by formal pedantry, and without the lingering grace of traditional dignity. Your truly sound scholarship is concerned rather with such questions as we are properly concerned with here and now. Its highest hope, in literary matters, is to assert and to maintain persistent facts in their enduring values. In the case of Poe, for example, its chief questions are first of what from among his copious and varied work has incontestably survived the conditions of his human environment, and secondly of why this survival has occurred. What contribution did Poe make to lasting literature? Does this

justly belong to the literature of the world, as well as to that of America? In brief, why is he so memorable as we all acknowledge by our presence here today?

Stated thus, these questions are not very hard to answer. The Poe of literature is the writer of a good many tales, or short stories, and of a few intensely individual, though not deeply confidential, poems. Stories and poems alike stand apart not only from all others in the literature of America, but—I believe we may agree—from any others anywhere. Some profoundly, some rather more superficially, they all possess, in their due degree, an impalpable quality which the most subtle of us might well be at pains to define, but which the most insensitive man imaginable can always, surely, recurrently feel. The most remarkable phase of the impression they thus make is probably the complete and absolute certainty of its recurrence. Turn, whenever you will and in whatever mood, to any of Poe's work which has proved more than ephemeral. Tale or poem, it may chance either to appeal to you or to repel you. In one mood you may think it inspired; in another,

you may find it little better than prankishly artificial. You may praise it until dissent gape breathless at your superlatives; or you may relentlessly point out what you are pleased to believe its limitations, its artificialities, its patent defects. Even then, a very simple question must bring you to pause. Let anybody ask you what this piece of literature is like, or what is like it,—let anybody ask with what we should match it. Whether you love it or are tempted to disdain it, you must be forced to the admission that it is almost unique. Whatever its ultimate significance, the better work of Poe remains altogether itself, and therefore altogether his. This gleams the more vividly as you come to recognize how his individuality asserts itself to you, whatever your own passing mood, under any imaginable conditions. The utterance of Poe is as incontestably, as triumphantly, itself as is the note of a song bird—as poets abroad have found the music of the skylark, or of the nightingale, or as our own countryfolk find the call of the whip-poor-will echoing through the twilight of American woods.

His individuality, the while, is of a kind for

which our language hardly affords a name more exact than the name poetic. The accident that we are generally accustomed to confuse the spirit of poetry with some common features of poetic structure can mislead us only for a moment. Poetry is not essentially a matter of rhyme or meter, of measure and quality in sound or syllable. The essence of it is not material but spiritual. There are few more comprehensive descriptions of it than the most familiar in all English literature:—

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:—
One sees more devils than vast Hell can hold,—
That is, the madman; the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt;
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to
 heaven;
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

In all the literature of America, and indeed in all that of the English language, you will be at pains to point out utterances more illustrative of these lines,—I had almost said more definitive,—than you shall find in the tales and

the poems of Poe at their surviving best. Momentarily illusive though his concrete touches may sometimes make his tales,—and he possessed, to a rare degree, the power of arousing “that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith,”—the substance of his enduring phantasies may always be reduced to the forms of things unknown, bodied forth by sheer power of imagination. To these airy nothings the cunning of his pen, turning them to shapes, gives local habitations and names so distinct and so vivid that now and again you must be at pains to persuade yourself that in final analysis they are substantially unreal. Yet unreal they always prove at last, phantasmally and hauntingly immaterial. They are like figured tapestries spun and woven, warp and woof, from such stuff as dreams are made of. Only the dreams are not quite our own. The dreamer who has dreamed them is the poet who has woven them into this fabric, making them now forever ours as well as his. Without his own innermost life they could never have come into being at all. Without his consummate craftsmanship, itself almost a miracle, they must

have hovered inexorable beyond the range of all other consciousness than his who dreamed them. Dreamer and craftsman alike, and supreme, it is he, and none but he, who can make us feel, in certain most memorable phases, the fascinating, fantastic, elusive, incessant mystery of that which must forever environ human consciousness, unseen, unknown, impalpable, implacable, undeniable.

The mood we are thus attempting to define is bafflingly elusive; it has no precise substance, no organic or articulate form. It is essentially a concept not of reason, or even of pervasive human emotion, but only of poetry—a subtly phantasmal state of spirit, evocable only by the poet who has been endowed with power to call it from the vasty deep where, except for him, it must have lurked forever. If it were not unique, it could not be itself; for it would not be quite his, and whatever is not quite his is not his at all. So much we may confidently assert. And yet if we should permit ourselves either to rest with the assertion, or to stray in fancy through conclusion after conclusion towards which it may have seemed to lead us, we should remain or wan-

der mischievously far from the truth. That Poe's imagination was solitary, like so much of the circumstances of his life, we need not deny or dispute. Clearly, nevertheless, he lived his solitary life not in some fantastic nowhere, but amid the familiarly recorded realities of these United States of America, during the first half of the nineteenth century. It is equally clear that throughout the years when his solitary poetic imagination was giving to its airy nothings their local habitations and their names, countless other poetic imaginations, at home and abroad, were striving to do likewise, each in its own way and fashion. Solitary, apart, almost defiant though the aspect of Poe may have seemed, isolated though we may still find the records of his life, or the creatures of his imagination, he was never anachronistic. Even the visual image of his restless presence, which we tried to call up a little while ago, will prove on scrutiny not only individual, but outwardly cast in the form and the habit of its own time—to the very decade and year of the almanac. With his dreams, and with the magic fabrics

into which he wrought them, the case is much the same. Neither dreams nor fabrics, any more than his bodily presence, could have been quite themselves—and still less could the dreams and the fabrics have fused forever in their wondrous poetic harmonies—during any other epoch than that wherein Poe lived and moved and had his being.

What I mean must soon be evident if we stop to seek a general name for the kind of poetical mood which Poe could always evoke in so specific a form and degree. The word is instantly at hand, inexact and canting if you will, but undeniable. It is the word which his contemporaries might carelessly, yet not untruly, have applied to his personal appearance, alluring to the eye if only for the quiet defiance of his temperamental solitude. It is the word by which we might most fitly have characterized such impulsive curiosity as should have impelled us, if we had seen him, to inquire who this mysterious-looking stranger might be. It is the word—misused, teasing, elusive—by which we are still apt indefinitely to define the general æsthetic temper of his time, all

over the European and American world. We use it concerning all manner of emotion and of conduct, and all phases of literature or of the other fine arts throughout their whole protean ranges of expression. You will have guessed already, long before I come to utter it, the word thus hovering in all our minds—the word romantic.

If we should hereupon attempt formally to define what this familiar word means, there would be no hope left us. Turn, as widely as you will, to dictionaries, to encyclopædias, to volumes, and to libraries of volumes. Each may throw its ray of light on the matter; none will completely illuminate it or irradiate. You might as well seek words which should comprehend, in descriptive finality, the full, delicate, sensuous truth of the savor of a fruit or of the scent of a flower. Yet, for all this, there are aspects of romanticism on which we may helpfully dwell; and of these the first is an acknowledged matter of history. Throughout all parts of the world then dominated by European tradition, the temper of the first half of the nineteenth century was strongly

romantic. This was nowhere more evident than in the spontaneous outburst of poetry which, in less than twenty years, enriched the roll of English poets with the names of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron, and Scott. Now the way in which this period of poetry was lately described in an American announcement of teaching may help us to perceive with a little more approach to precision, one feature of what romanticism everywhere means. Some worthy professor, doubtless chary of indefinite terms, chose to describe the romantic poets as those of the period when the individual spirit revived in English literature. Poetic or not, this sound instructor of youth was historically right. The very essence of romanticism lies in passionate assertion of literary or artistic individuality. Wherefore, as we can now begin to feel sure, that romantic isolation of Poe's has double significance; it not only marks him, apart from others, as individual, but it defines him, at the same time, as an individual of his own romantic period.

We shall not go astray, then, if we ponder

for a little while on this whole romantic generation. Before long, we may contentfully agree that the individualism of the romantic poets resulted everywhere from their passionate declaration of independence from outworn poetic authority. The precise form of poetic authority from which they thus broke free was the pseudo-classic tradition of the eighteenth century—in matters literary a period of formal rhetorical decency, and of a cool common-sense which had little mercy for the vagaries of uncontrolled æsthetic emotion. Already we may well feel insecure. We are straying, beyond dispute, into dangerously elusive generalization, interminably debatable. Yet, if our present line of thought is to lead us anywhere, we must not hesitate to generalize more boldly still. That same eighteenth century, from which romanticism broke free, was not a sporadic and intensive episode in the history of European culture; it was the culmination of a period at least five hundred years long. This period began when the reviving critical scholarship of the Renaissance brought back to the dominant upper consciousness of

Europe vivid understanding of the facts of classical antiquity; and when, so doing, it began to suppress the vigorous and splendid body of intervening tradition and temper to which we have consequently given the name of mediæval. In matters literary, at least, the spirit which began with the Renaissance persisted until the Revolution of the dying eighteenth century prepared the way for that nineteenth century, of romantic freedom, wherein Poe lived and did his living work.

Already we can begin to see that there was some analogy between the Middle Ages, which preceded the Renaissance, and the epoch of romanticism which ensued after the eighteenth century. Both periods, at least, were free each in its own way from the intellectual control of such formal classicism or pseudo-classicism as intervened. A little closer scrutiny of the Middle Ages may therefore help us to appreciate what nineteenth-century romanticism meant. Throughout that whole mediæval period, we may soon agree, the intellect of Europe was authoritatively forbidden to exert itself

beyond narrowly fixed and rigid limits. European emotion, meanwhile, was permitted vagrant and luxuriant freedom of range and of expression. It might wander wherever it would. In contrast with this period, we can now perceive, the Renaissance may be conceived as an intellectual declaration of independence; and through a full five hundred years, the intellect of Europe was increasingly free. Its very freedom made it, in turn, tyrannical. At least in the matters of temper and of fashion, it repressed, controlled, or ignored the ranges of emotion which had flourished during its subjection. In literature its tyranny extended far and wide. Though for awhile thought was permitted to range more or less free, emotion was at best sentimentalized. So, when the centuries of tyranny were past, poetry, if it were ever to regain full freedom of emotional existence, to enjoy again the fine frenzy of creation, needed more than independence. To revive the spirit which should vitally reanimate its enfranchisement it needed to drink again from the fountains for which it had thirsted for centuries; it must revert

to something like the unfettered emotional freedom of the Middle Ages. To put the case a little more distinctly, the romanticism of the nineteenth century could be its true self only when to the intellectual maturity developed by five centuries of classical culture it could add full and eager sympathy with the emotional freedom of the Middle Ages, inevitably ancestral to all modernity. So it was a profoundly vital instinct which directed the enthusiasm of poets to mediæval themes and traditions, even though these were imperfectly understood. The inspiration derived from them came not so much from any detail of their actual historical circumstances as from their instant, obvious remoteness from the common-sense facts of daily experience—matters judiciously to be handled only by the colorless activity of intellect. It was remoteness from actuality which above all else made romantic your romantic ruins and romantic villains, your romantic heroines, your romantic passions and your romantic aspirations. Yet even your most romantic poet must give the airy nothings of his imagination a local habitation .

and a name. Unreal and fantastic though they might be, they must possess at least some semblance of reality. And this semblance, whether bodily or spiritual, normally assumed a mediæval guise.

Throughout Europe such semblance could always be guided, controlled, and regulated by the pervasive presence everywhere of relics, material or traditional, of the mediæval times thus at length welcomed back to the light. So far as the full romantic literature of Europe deals with mediæval matters, accordingly, or so far as intentionally or instinctively it reverts to mediæval temper, it has a kind of solidity hardly to be found in the poetic utterance of its contemporary America. For, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, America was not only consciously further than Europe from all the common roots of our ancestral humanity; it possessed hardly a line of what is now accepted as our national literature. As patriots and as men of their time, the poets of America were called on to add their part to romantic expression. To give their expression semblance of reality they had no mediæval relics

to guide them, nor enduring local traditions, thick and strong about them. They were compelled to rely on sheer force of creative imagination. Pretentious as that phrase may sound, it is animated by a spirit of humility. Its purpose is in no wise to claim superiority for the romantic literary achievement of our country. It is rather, by stating the magnitude of our national task, to explain our comparative lack of robust solidity, and to indicate why the peculiar note of our country must inevitably have been a note of singular, though not necessarily of powerful, creative purity.

Now just such creative purity is evidently characteristic of Poe. It may sometimes have seemed that among our eminent men of letters he is the least obviously American. A little while ago, indeed, when I again turned through all the pages of his collected works, I was freshly surprised to find how little explicit trace they bore of the precise environment where they were written. Throughout all their length, it seemed, there was not a single complete page on which a stranger might rest proof that it had come

to the light in this country. The first example which occurs to me—it happens to be also the most generally familiar—will show what I have in mind: the mysterious chamber where the Raven forces uncanny entrance is not American. The image of it originated, I believe, in a room still pointed out. Yet, so far as the atmosphere of it is concerned, that room might have been anywhere; or rather, as it lives far and wide, it is surely nowhere. Yet, all the while, it has strange semblance of reality. What is true here proves true throughout. The Paris of Poe's detective stories is no real Paris; the House of Usher never stood, or fell, on any earthly continent; Poe's maelstrom whirls as fantastic as the balloon or the moon of Hans Pfaal. One might go on unceasingly, recalling at random impression after impression, vivid as the most vivid of dreams, and always as impalpable. There is nowhere else romantic fantasy so securely remote from all constraining taint of literal reality; there is none anywhere more unconditioned in its creative freedom. And thus, paradoxical though the thought may at first seem, Poe tacitly, but clearly and tri-

umphantly, asserts his nationality. No other romanticism of the nineteenth century was ever so serenely free from limitation of material condition and tradition; none, therefore, was so indisputably what the native romanticism of America must inevitably have been. Call his work significant, if you like, or call it unmeaning; decide that it is true or false, as you will, in ethical or artistic purpose. Nothing can alter its wondrous independence of all but deliberately accepted artistic limitations. In this supreme artistic purity lies not only the chief secret of its wide appeal, but at the same time the subtle trait which marks it as the product of its own time, and of its own time nowhere else than here in America, our common country.

American though Poe's utterance be, the while, it stays elusive. When one tries to group it with any other utterance of his time, one feels again and afresh the impression of its temperamental solitude. This solitude is far from prophetic or austere; it is as remote as possible from that of a voice crying in the wilderness. Nor indeed was America, in Poe's time, any longer a wilderness wherein

a poet should seem a stranger. Even though when the nineteenth century began there was hardly such a thing as literature in America, the years of Poe's life brought us rather copiousness than dearth of national expression. As a New Englander, for example, I may perhaps be pardoned for reminding you that in the year 1830 Boston could not have shown you a single enduring volume to demonstrate that it was ever to be a centre of purely literary importance. Twenty years later, when Poe died, the region of Boston had already produced, in pure literature, the fully developed characters, though not yet the complete and rounded work, of Emerson, and Longfellow, and Lowell, and Holmes, and Whittier and Hawthorne. For the moment, I call this group to mind only that we may more clearly perceive the peculiar individuality of Poe. In many aspects, each of the New England group was individual, enough and to spare; no one who ever knew them could long confuse one with another. Yet individual though they were, none of them ever seems quite solitary or isolated. You rarely think of any among them as standing apart from

the rest, nor yet from the historical, the social, the religious or the philosophic conditions which brought them all to the point of poetic utterance. Now Poe was in every sense their contemporary; yet the moment you gladly yield yourself to the contagion of his poetic sympathy, you find yourself alone with him—æsthetically solitary. You might fancy yourself for the while fantastically disembodied—a waking wanderer in some region of unalloyed dreams. American though he be, beyond peradventure, and a man of his time as well, he proves beyond all other Americans throughout the growingly illustrious roll of our national letters, resistant to all imprisonment within any classifying formula which should surely include any other than his own haunting and fascinating self.

This isolation might at first seem a token of weakness. For enduring as the fascination of Poe must forever be,—even to those who strive to resist it and give us dozens of wise pages to prove him undeserving of such attention,—the most ardent of his admirers can hardly maintain his work to be dominant or commanding. Except for the pleasure it gives

you, it leaves you little moved; it does not meddle with your philosophy, or modify your rules of conduct. Its power lies altogether in the strange excellence of its peculiar beauty. And even though the most ethical poet of his contemporary New England has immortally assured us that beauty is its own excuse for being, we can hardly forget that Emerson's aphorism sprang from contemplation of a wild flower, in the exquisite perfection of ephemeral fragility. A slight thing some might thus come to fancy the isolated work of Poe—the poet of nineteenth century America whose spirit hovered most persistently remote from actuality.

If such mood should threaten to possess us, even for a little while, the concourse here gathered together should surely set us free. That spirit which hovered aloof sixty and seventy years ago is hovering still. It shall hover, we can now confidently assert, through centuries unending. The solitude of weakness, or of fragility is no such solitude as this; weak and fragile solitude vanishes with its earthly self, leaving no void behind. Solitude which endures as Poe's is enduring

proves itself by the very tenacity of its endurance to be the solitude of unflagging and independent strength. Such strength as this is sure token of poetic greatness. We may grow more confident than ever. We may unhesitatingly assert Poe not only American, but great.

And now we come to one further question, nearer to us, as fellow-countrymen, than those on which we have touched before. It is the question of just where the enduring work of this great American poet should be placed in the temperamental history of our country—of just what phase it may be held to express of the national spirit of America.

That national spirit—the spirit which animates and inspires the life of our native land—has had a solemn and a tragic history. From the very beginning of our national growth, historic circumstance at once prevented any spiritual centralization of our national life, and encouraged in diverse regions, equally essential to the completeness of our national existence, separate spiritual centers, each true to itself and for that very reason defiant of others. So far as the separate phases of our

national spirit have ever been able to meet one another open-hearted, they have marvelled to know the true depth of their communion. But open-hearted meeting has not always been possible. And throughout the nineteenth century—the century in which Poe lived and wrought—it was hardly possible at all. Americans were brethren, as they were brethren before, as they are brethren now, as they shall stay brethren, God willing, through centuries to come. For the while, however, their brotherhood was sadly turbulent. They believed that they spoke a common language. The accents of it sounded familiar to the ears of all. Yet the meanings which those accents were bidden to carry seemed writhed into distortion on their way to the very ears which were straining to catch them. It was an epoch, we must sadly grant, of a Babel of the spirit.

So, throughout Poe's time, there was hardly one among the many whom the time held greater than he to whose voice the united spirit of our country could ever unhesitatingly and harmoniously respond. What I have in mind may well have occurred to you, of Vir-

ginia, when a little while ago I named the six chief literary worthies of nineteenth century New England. They were contemporaries of Poe. They were honest men and faithful poets. They never hesitated to utter, with all their hearts, what they devotedly believed to be the truth. And every one of them was immemorially American. Not one of them cherished any ancestral tradition but was native to this country, since the far-off days of King Charles the First. In every one of them, accordingly, any American—North or South, East or West—must surely find utterances heroically true to the idealism ancestrally and peculiarly our own. Yet it would be mischievous folly to pretend that such utterances, speaking for us all, can ever tell the whole story of the New England poets. They were not only Americans, as we all are; they were Americans of nineteenth century New England. As such they could not have been the honest men they were if they had failed to concern themselves passionately with the irrepressible disputes and conflicts of their tragic times. They could not so concern themselves without utterance after utterance fatally

sure to provoke passionate response, or passionate revulsion in fellow-countrymen of traditions other than their own.

Even this sad truth hardly includes the limitation of their localism. Turn to their quieter passages, descriptive or gently anecdotic. Strong, simple, sincere, admirable though these be, they are themselves, we must freely grant, chiefly because they could have been made nowhere else than just where they were. In New England, for example, there was never a native human being who could fail to recognize in "Snow Bound" a genuine utterance straight from the stout heart of his own people; nor yet one, I believe, who, smile though he might at his own sentimentality, could resist the appeal of the "Village Blacksmith." But we may well doubt whether any Southern reader, in those old times, could have helped feeling that these verses—as surely as those of Burns, let us say, or of Wordsworth—came from other regions than those familiar to his daily life.

The literature of New England, in brief, American though we may all gladly assert it in its nobler phases, is first of all not American

or national, but local. What is thus true of New England is generally true, I believe, of literary expression throughout America. Turn, if you will, to the two memorable writers of New York during the first quarter of the nineteenth century—Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper. They were good men, and honest men of letters, and admirable story-tellers. Neither of them, however, wasted any love on his neighbors a little to the eastward; both hated the unwinsome surface of decadent Puritanism; and neither understood the mystic fervor of the Puritan spirit. So, even to this day, a sensitive reader in New England will now and again discover, in Irving or in Cooper, passages or turns of phrases which shall still set his blood faintly tingling with resentment. Whatever the positive merit, whatever the sturdy honesty of most American expression in the nineteenth century, it lacked conciliatory breadth of feeling. Its intensity of localism marks it, whatever the peacefulness of its outward guise, as the utterance of a fatally discordant time.

Now it is from this same discordant time that the works of Poe have come down to us;

and no work could have been much less inspired by the local traditions and temper of New England. To his vagrant and solitary spirit, indeed, those traditions must have been abhorrent. New England people, too, would probably have liked him as little as he liked them. You might well expect that even now, when the younger generations of New England turn to his tales or his poems, sparks of resentment might begin to rekindle. In one sense, perhaps, they may seem to; for Poe's individuality is too intense for universal appeal. You will find readers in New England, just as you will find readers elsewhere, who stay deaf to the haunting music of his verse, and blind to the wreathing films of his unearthly fantasy. Such lack of sympathy, however, you will never find to be a matter of ancestral tradition or of local prejudice or of sectional limitation; it will prove wholly and unconditionally to be only a matter of individual temperament. Among the enduring writers of nineteenth century America, Poe stands unique. Inevitably of his country and of his time, he eludes all limitation of more narrow scope or circumstance. Of all, I be-

lieve, he is the only one to whom, in his own day, all America might confidently have turned, as all America may confidently turn still, and forever, with certainty of finding no line, no word, no quiver of thought or of feeling which should arouse or revive the consciousness or the memory of our tragic national discords, now happily for all of us heroic matters of the past. The more we dwell on the enduring work of this great American poet, the more clearly this virtue of it must shine before us all. In the temperamental history of our country, it is he, and he alone, as yet, who is not local but surely enduringly national in the full range of his appeal.

As I thus grow to reverence in him a wondrous harbinger of American spiritual reunion, I find hovering in my fancy some lines of his which, once heard, can never be quite forgotten. To him, I believe, they must have seemed only a thing of beauty. He would have been impatient of the suggestion that any one should ever read into them the prose of deeper significance. It was song, and only

song, which possessed him, when he wrote the words—

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
From my lyre within the sky.

And yet is it too much to fancy that to-day we can hear that bolder note swelling about us as we meet in communion? None could be purer, none more sweet. And none could more serenely help to resolve the discords of his fellow-countrymen into enduring harmony.

Dr. C. Alphonso Smith, of the University of North Carolina, spoke on "The Americanism of Poe:"

The continental tributes to Poe which were read this morning recalled an incident in which the name of the founder of this University and the name of its most illustrious son were suggestively linked together. In the Latin Quarter of Paris it was my fortune to be thrown for some time into intimate companionship with a young Roumanian named Toma Draga. He had come fresh from Roumania to the University of Paris and was all aflame with stimulant plans and ideals for the growth of liberty and literature in his native land. His trunk was half filled with Roumanian ballads which he had collected and in part rewritten and which he wished to have published in Paris as his contribution to the new movement which was already revolutionizing the politics and the native literature of his historic little motherland. He knew not a word of English but his knowledge of French gave him a sort of eclectic familiarity with world literature in general. Shakespeare

he knew well, but the two names that were most often on his lips were the names of Thomas Jefferson and Edgar Allan Poe. Time and again he quoted in his impassioned way the Declaration of Independence and the poems of Poe with an enthusiasm and sense of personal indebtedness that will remain to me as an abiding inspiration.

Let the name of Toma Draga stand as evidence that the significance of genius is not exhausted by the written tributes of great scholars and critics, however numerous or laudatory these may be. There is an ever-widening circle of aspiring spirits who do not put into studied phrase the formal measure of their indebtedness but whose hands have received the unflickering torch and whose hearts know from whence it came. And let the names of Jefferson and Poe, whose far-flung battle-lines intersected on this campus, forever remind us that this University is dedicated not to the mere routine of recitation rooms and laboratories but to the emancipation of those mighty constructive forces that touch the spirits of men to finer aspirations and mould their aspirations to finer issues.

In an address delivered at the exercises attending the unveiling of the Zolnay bust of Poe, Mr. Hamilton W. Mabie declared that Poe alone, among men of his eminence, could not have been foreseen. "It is," said he, "the first and perhaps the most obvious distinction of Edgar Allan Poe that his creative work baffles all attempts to relate it historically to antecedent condition; that it detached itself almost completely from the time and place in which it made its appearance, and sprang suddenly and mysteriously from a soil which had never borne its like before." That Mr. Mabie has here expressed the current conception of Poe and his work will be conceded by every one who is at all in touch with the vast body of Poe literature that has grown up since the poet's death. He is regarded as the great *déclassé* of American literature, a solitary figure, denationalized and almost dehumanized, not only unindebted to his Southern environment but unrelated to the larger American background,—in a word, a man without a country.

My own feeling about Poe has always been different, and the recent edition of the poet's

works by Professor James A. Harrison, reproducing almost four volumes of Poe's literary criticism hitherto inaccessible, has confirmed a mere impression into a settled conviction. The criticism of the future will not impeach the primacy of Poe's genius but will dwell less upon detachment from surroundings and more upon the practical and representative quality of his work.

The relatedness of a writer to his environment and to his nationality does not consist primarily in his fidelity to local landscape or in the accuracy with which he portrays representative characters. Byron and Browning are essentially representative of their time and as truly English as Wordsworth, though the note of locality in the narrower sense is negligible in the works of both. They stood, however, for distinctive tendencies of their time. They interpreted these tendencies in essentially English terms and thus both receptively and actively proclaimed their nationality. If we judge Poe by the purely physical standards of *locale*, he belongs nowhere. His native land lies east of the sun and west of the moon. His nationality will be found as indeterminate

as that of a fish, and his impress of locality no more evident than that of a bird. No landscape that he ever sketched could be identified and no character that he ever portrayed had real human blood in his veins. The representative quality in Poe's work is to be sought neither in his note of locality, nor in the topics which he preferred to treat, nor in his encompassing atmosphere of terror, despair, and decay. But the man could not have so profoundly influenced the literary craftsmanship of his own period and of succeeding periods if he had not in a way summarized the tendencies of his age and organized them into finer literary form.

If one lobe of Poe's brain was pure ideality, haunted by specters, the other was pure intellect, responsive to the literary demands of his day and adequate to their fulfillment. It was this lobe of his brain that made him not the broadest thinker but the greatest constructive force in American literature. He thought in terms of structure, for his genius was essentially structural. In the technique of effective expression he sought for ultimate principles with a patience and persistence worthy of

Washington; he brought to his poems and short stories an economy of words and a husbandry of details that suggest the thriftiness of Franklin; and he both realized and supplied the structural needs of his day with a native insight and inventiveness that proclaim him of the line of Edison.

The central question with Poe was not "How may I write a beautiful poem or tell an interesting story?" but "How may I produce the maximum of effect with the minimum of means?" This practical, scientific strain in his work becomes more and more dominating during all of his short working period. His poems, his stories, and his criticisms cannot be thoroughly understood without constant reference to this criterion of craftsmanship. It became the foundation stone on which he built his own work and the touchstone by which he tested the work of others. It was the first time in our history that a mind so keenly analytic had busied itself with the problems of literary technique. And yet Poe was doing for our literature only what others around him were doing or attempting to do in the domain of political and industrial

efficiency. The time was ripe, and the note that he struck was both national and international.

Professor Münsterberg,¹ of Harvard, thus characterizes the intellectual qualities of the typical American: "The intellectual make-up of the American is especially adapted to scientific achievements. This temperament, owing to the historical development of the nation, has so far addressed itself to political, industrial, and judicial problems, but a return to theoretical science has set in; and there, most of all, the happy combination of inventiveness, enthusiasm, and persistence in pursuit of a goal, of intellectual freedom and of idealistic instinct for self-perfection will yield, perhaps soon, remarkable triumphs." He might have added that these qualities may be subsumed under the general term of constructiveness and that more than a half century ago they found an exemplar in Edgar Allan Poe.

It is a noteworthy fact, and one not sufficiently emphasized, that Poe's unique influence at home and abroad has been a structural

1. In "The Americans," p. 428.

influence rather than a thought influence. He has not suggested new themes to literary artists, nor can his work be called a criticism of life; but he has taught prose writers new methods of effectiveness in building their plots, in handling their backgrounds, in developing their situations, and in harmonizing their details to a preordained end. He has taught poets how to modulate their cadences to the most delicately calculated effects, how to reinforce the central mood of their poems by repetition and parallelism of phrase, how to shift their tone-color, how to utilize sound-symbolism, how to evoke strange memories by the mere succession of vowels, so that the simplest stanza may be steeped in a music as compelling as an incantation and as cunningly adapted to the end in view. The word that most fitly characterizes Poe's constructive art is the word convergence. There are no parallel lines in his best work. With the opening sentence the lines begin to converge toward the predetermined effect. This is Poe's greatest contribution to the craftsmanship of his art.

Among foreign dramatists and prose writers

whose structural debt to Poe is confessed or unquestioned may be mentioned Victorien Sardou, Théophile Gautier, Guy de Maupassant, Edmond About, Jules Verne, Emile Gaboriau, Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, Hall Caine, and Conan Doyle. In English poetry the debt is still greater. "Poe has proved himself," says the English poet-critic Gosse, "to be the Piper of Hamelin to all later English poets. From Tennyson to Austin Dobson there is hardly one whose verse music does not show traces of Poe's influence." A German critic,² after a masterly review of Poe's work, declares that he has put upon English poetry the stamp of classicism, that he has infused into it Greek spirit and Greek taste, that he has constructed artistic metrical forms of which the English language had not hitherto been deemed capable.

But the greatest tribute to Poe's constructive genius is that both by theory and practice he is the acknowledged founder of the American short story as a distinct literary type. Pro-

2. Edmund Gündel in "Edgar Allan Poe: ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis und Würdigung des Dichters," Freiberg, 1895, page 28.

fessor Brander Matthews³ goes further and asserts that "Poe first laid down the principles which governed his own construction and which have been quoted very often, because they have been accepted by the masters of the short story in every modern language." It seems more probable, however, that France and America hit upon the new form independently,⁴ and that the honor of influencing the later short stories of England, Germany, Russia, and Scandinavia belongs as much to French writers as to Poe.

The growth of Poe's constructive sense makes a study of rare interest. He had been editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*

3. See "The Short-Story: Specimens Illustrating Its Development," 1907, page 25.

4. "'La Morte Amoureuse' [by Gautier], though it has not Poe's mechanism of compression, is otherwise so startlingly like Poe that one turns involuntarily to the dates. 'La Morte Amoureuse' appeared in 1836; 'Berenice,' in 1835. *The Southern Literary Messenger* could not have reached the boulevards in a year. Indeed, the debt of either country to the other can hardly be proved. Remarkable as is the coincident appearance in Paris and in Richmond of a new literary form, it remains a coincidence."—Introduction to Professor Charles Sears Baldwin's "American Short Stories" (in the Wampum Library), 1904, page 33.

only two months when in comparing the poems of Mrs. Sigourney and Mrs. Hemans he used a phrase in which he may be said to have first found himself structurally. This phrase embodied potentially his distinctive contribution to the literary technique of his day. "In pieces of less extent," he writes,⁵ "like the poems of Mrs. Sigourney, the pleasure is *unique*, in the proper acceptation of that term—the understanding is employed, without difficulty, in the contemplation of the picture *as a whole*—and thus its effect will depend, in a very great degree, upon the perfection of its finish, upon the nice adaptation of its constituent parts, and especially upon what is rightly termed by Schlegel the *unity* or *totality of interest*." Further on in the same paragraph he substitutes "totality of effect."

Six years later⁶ he published his now famous criticism of Hawthorne's "Twice-Told Tales," a criticism that contains, in one oft-quoted paragraph, the constitution of the modern short story as distinct from

5. *Southern Literary Messenger*, January, 1836.

6. In *Graham's Magazine*, May, 1842.

the story that is merely short. After calling attention to the "immense force derivable from totality," he continues: "A skillful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents,—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. If his very initial sentence tend not to the outbringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one preëstablished design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel."

In 1846 he publishes his "Philosophy of Composition"⁷ in which he analyzes the

7. In the April number of *Graham's Magazine*.

structure of "The Raven" and declares that he confined the poem to about one hundred lines so as to secure "the vastly important artistic element, totality or unity of effect." In 1847, in a review of Hawthorne's "Mosses from an Old Manse," he republishes⁸ with hardly the change of a word the portions of his former review emphasizing the importance of "totality of effect." The year after his death his popular lecture on "The Poetic Principle" is published,⁹ in which he contends that even "The Iliad" and "Paradise Lost" have had their day because their length deprives them of "totality of effect."

This phrase, then, viewed in its later development, is not only the most significant phrase that Poe ever used but the one that most adequately illustrates his attitude as critic, poet, and story writer. It will be remembered that when he first used the phrase he attributed it to William Schlegel. The phrase is not found in Schlegel, nor any

8. In the November number of *Godey's Lady's Book*.

9. In *Sartain's Union Magazine*, October, 1850.

phrase analogous to it. Schlegel's "Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature" had been translated into English, and in Poe's other citations from this great work he quotes accurately. But in this case he was either depending upon a faulty memory or, as is more probable, he was invoking the prestige of the great German to give currency and authority to a phrase which he himself coined and which, more than any other phrase that he ever used, expressed his profoundest conviction about the architecture of literature. The origin of the phrase is to be sought not in borrowing but rather in the nature of Poe's genius and in the formlessness of the contemporary literature upon which as critic he was called to pass judgment. Had Poe lived long enough to read Herbert Spencer's "Philosophy of Style," in which economy of the reader's energies is made the sum total of literary craftsmanship, he would doubtless have promptly charged the Englishman with plagiarism, though he would have been the first to show the absurdity of Spencer's contention that the difference between poetry

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and prose is a difference only in the degree of economy of style.

Schlegel, it may be added, could not have exerted a lasting influence upon Poe. The two men had little in common. Schlegel's method was not so much analytic as historical and comparative. His vast learning gave him control of an almost illimitable field of dramatic criticism while Poe's limitations made his method essentially individual and intensive. The man to whom Poe owed most was Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The influence of Coleridge grew upon Poe steadily. Both represented a curious blend of the dreamer and the logician. Both generalized with rapidity and brilliancy. Both were masters of the singing qualities of poetry, and both were persistent investigators of the principles of meter and structure. Though Coleridge says nothing about "totality of effect"¹⁰

10. The nearest approach is in chapter XIV of the "Biographia Literaria:" "A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species (having this object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the whole, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part."

and would not have sanctioned Poe's application of the phrase, it is undoubtedly true that Poe found in Coleridge his most fecundating literary influence.

In his admiration for Coleridge and in his antipathy to Carlyle, Poe was thoroughly representative of the South of his day. The great Scotchman's work was just beginning and Coleridge's career had just closed when Poe began to be known. Carlyle and Coleridge were both spokesmen of the great transcendental movement which originated in Germany and which found a hospitable welcome in New England. But transcendentalism in New England meant a fresh scrutiny of all existing institutions, social, political, and religious. It was identified with Unitarianism, Fourierism, the renunciation of dogma and authority, and the increasing agitation of abolition. "Communities were established," says Lowell, "where everything was to be common but common sense." The South had already begun to be on the defensive and now looked askance at the whole movement. Coleridge, however, like Burke and Wordsworth, had outgrown his

radicalism and come back into the settled ways of institutional peace and orderliness. His writings, especially his "Biographia Literaria," his "Statesman's Manual," and his "Lay Sermon," were welcomed in the South not only because of their charm of style but because they mingled profound philosophy with matured conservatism. No one can read the lives of the Southern leaders of ante-bellum days without being struck by the immense influence of Coleridge and the tardy recognition of Carlyle's message. When Emerson, therefore, in 1836, has "Sartor Resartus" republished in Boston, and Poe at the same time urges in the *Southern Literary Messenger* the republication of the "Biographia Literaria," both are equally representative of their sections.

But Poe as the disciple of Coleridge rather than of Carlyle is not the less American because representatively Southern. The intellectual activity of the South from 1830 to 1850 has been on the whole underrated because that activity was not expended upon the problems which wrought so fruitfully upon the more responsive spirits of New

England, among whom flowered at last the ablest group of writers that this country has known. The South cared nothing for novel views of inspiration, for radical reforms in church, in state, or in society. Proudly conscious of her militant and constructive rôle in laying the foundations of the new republic, the South after 1830 was devoting her energies to interpreting and conserving what the fathers had sanctioned. This work, however, if not so splendidly creative as that of earlier times, was none the less constructive in its way and national in its purpose. Poe's formative years, therefore, were spent in a society rarely trained in subtle analysis, in logical acumen, and in keen philosophic interpretation.

Though Poe does not belong to politics or to statesmanship, there was much in common between his mind and that of John C. Calhoun, widely separated as were their characters and the arenas on which they played their parts. Both were keenly alive to the implications of a phrase. Both reasoned with an intensity born not of impulsiveness but of sheer delight in making

delicate distinctions. Both showed in their choice of words an element of the pure classicism that lingered longer in the South than in New England or Old England; and both illustrated an individual independence more characteristic of the South than would be possible amid the leveling influences of to-day. When Baudelaire defined genius as "l'affirmation de l'indépendance individuelle," he might have had both Poe and Calhoun in mind; but when he adds "c'est le *self-government* appliqué aux œuvres d'art," only Poe could be included. Both, however, were builders, the temple of the one visible from all lands, that of the other scarred by civil war but splendid in the very cohesiveness of its structure.

I have dwelt thus at length upon the constructive side of Poe's genius because it is this quality that makes him most truly American and that has been at the same time almost ignored by foreign critics. Baudelaire, in his wonderfully sympathetic appraisal of Poe, considers him, however, as the apostle of the exceptional and abnormal.

Lauvrière,¹¹ in the most painstaking investigation yet bestowed upon an American author, views him chiefly as a pathological study. Moeller-Bruck,¹² the editor of the latest complete edition of Poe in Germany, sees in him "a dreamer from the old motherland of Europe, a Germanic dreamer." Poe was a dreamer, an idealist of idealists; and it is true that idealism is a trait of the American character. But American idealism is not of the Poe sort. American idealism is essentially ethical. It concerns itself primarily with conduct. Poe's Americanism is to be sought not in his idealism but in the sure craftsmanship, the conscious adaptation of means to end, the quick realization of structural possibilities, the practical handling of details, which enabled him to body forth his visions in enduring forms and thus to found the only new type of literature that America has originated.

The new century upon which Poe's name now enters will witness no diminution of

11. "Edgar Poe, sa vie et son œuvre: étude de psychologie pathologique." Paris, 1904.

12. "E. A. Poe's Sämtliche Werke." Minden i. W., 1904.

interest in his work. It will witness, however, a changed attitude toward it. Men will ask not less what he did but more how he did it. This scrutiny of the principles of his art will reveal the elements of the normal, the concrete, and the substantial, in which his work has hitherto been considered defective. It will reveal also the wide service of Poe to his fellow-craftsmen and the yet wider service upon which he enters. To inaugurate the new movement there is no better time than the centennial anniversary of his birth, and no better place than here where his genius was nourished.

Dr. Kent, in naming the recipients of the Poe medals, said :

Mr. President: Your committee of arrangements has deemed it wise to have prepared a significant memorial of this interesting celebration which is now coming to a happy close. Through the kindness and liberality of a young alumnus of the University of Virginia, we have been able to procure from Tiffany a beautiful bronze medal, bearing upon the reverse the seal of the University of Virginia, and on the obverse the profile of Edgar Allan Poe, with the date of his birth, and a reminder of this centenary. We have selected as the recipients of this medal those who were active in procuring for the University of Virginia the Zolnay bust of Poe; those who have contributed to the success of this present celebration; and others who by signal services in fixing or furthering the fame of Poe have deserved well of his *alma mater*. I have the honor to announce to you as worthy recipients of this medal the following:

The medals in commemoration of this

Centennial of the birth of Edgar Allan Poe
are bestowed:—

On The University of Virginia:

Library of the University of Virginia,
Colonnade Club,
Jefferson Society,
Raven Society.

On the following who contributed significantly to the success of the movement to commemorate the poet with a bronze bust:

Sidney Ernest Bradshaw, of Furman University,

Paul B. Barringer, president of Virginia Polytechnic Institute,

William A. Clarke, Jr., of Butte, Montana,

James W. Hunter, of Norfolk, Va.,

Hamilton W. Mabie, of New York,

Carol M. Newman, Virginia Polytechnic Institute,

William M. Thornton, University of Virginia,

Morris P. Tilley, of the University of Michigan,

Lewis C. Williams, of Richmond, Va.,

George Julian Zolnay, of St. Louis, Mo.

On the following who, by committee service, participation in the exercises, contribution of poems, etc., have contributed to the success of this occasion:—

Edwin Anderson Alderman, of the University of Virginia,

W. A. Barr, of Lynchburg,

James C. Bardin, of the University of Virginia,

Arthur Christopher Benson, Magdalene College, Cambridge,

Edward Dowden, Trinity College, Dublin,

Philip F. du Pont, of Philadelphia, Pa.,

Richard Dehmel, of Germany,

Georg Edward, of Northwestern University,

Alcée Fortier, of Tulane University,

William H. Faulkner, of the University of Virginia,

James Taft Hatfield, of Northwestern University,

Charles W. Hubner, of Atlanta, Georgia,

John Luck, of the University of Virginia,

Walter Malone, of Memphis, Tennessee,

Herbert M. Nash, of Norfolk, Va.,

F. V. N. Painter, of Roanoke College, Va.,

Willoughby Reade, of the Episcopal
High School,

E. Reinhold Rogers, of Charlottesville,
Va.,

Charles Alphonso Smith, of the Univer-
sity of North Carolina,

Robert Burns Wilson, of New York,

Barrett Wendell, of Boston, Mass.,

Leonidas Rutledge Whipple, of the Uni-
versity of Virginia,

James Southall Wilson, of William and
Mary College.

On the following for literary services of
various sorts connected with fixing and
furthering the fame of Edgar Allan Poe:—

Palmer Cobb, of the University of North
Carolina,

John Phelps Fruit, of Missouri,

Armistead C. Gordon, of Staunton, Va.,

James A. Harrison, of the University of
Virginia,

John H. Ingram, of London, England,

Charles W. Kent, of the University of
Virginia,

Emile Lauvrière, of Paris,

Abel Le franc, of Paris,
John S. Patton, of the University of Virginia,
Father John B. Tabb, of St. Charles College,
William P. Trent, of Columbia University,
George E. Woodberry, of Massachusetts,
John W. Wayland, of the University of Virginia,
Mrs. Susan Archer Weiss, of Richmond, Va.,
Samuel A. Link, of Tennessee,
Henry E. Shepherd, of Baltimore, Md.,
Robert A. Stewart, of Richmond, Va.,
Thomas Nelson Page, of Washington, D. C.,
George A. Wauchope, of the University of South Carolina.

For peculiar services to the University of Virginia, in connection with Poe:—

Mrs. Henry R. Chace, of Providence, R. I.,
Miss C. F. Dailey, of Providence, R. I.,
Miss Amelia F. Poe, of Baltimore, Md.,
Miss Bangs, of Washington, D. C.,

Miss Whiton, of Washington, D. C.,
Miss Sara Sigourney Rice, of Baltimore,
Md.

As representatives of the Poe family:—

W. C. Poe, of Baltimore, Md.,
Miss Anna Gertrude Poe, Relay, Md.

Mr. Freeman's programme of music for the evening included Mendelssohn's Priest's March from *Athalia*, arranged for the organ by Samuel Jackson; Bach's Toccata in D minor; Moszkowski's *Serenata*, arranged for the organ by Arthur Boyse; Schubert's Military March in D major (by request), arranged for the organ by W. T. Best.

VII

NO. 13 WEST RANGE: A POE MUSEUM

DURING the Centenary Celebration the room which Poe occupied while a student was used as a museum for Poeana. It was opened on January 16 under the auspices of the Raven Society, and visitors were admitted until the 20th. A considerable collection of Poe material was displayed. These memorials included the bronze bust of Poe designed by Zolnay; an oil painting of the Fordham Cottage by Sadakichi Hartman; an autographed letter of the poet's; the lace cap of his sister Rosalie; the entire library of Poe literature presented to the University of Virginia Library by Dr. James A. Harrison, editor of the Virginia edition of his works; a stuffed raven presented by an alumnus from Montana; a number of framed letters and poems by distinguished literary men; engravings of Poe's

residences; and a very interesting group of portraits of the author at various periods of his life. This material was lent by the University of Virginia, members of its faculty, and friends.

This little room, 13 West Range, is the only spot at the University of Virginia actually reminiscent of the living Edgar Allan Poe. That he did pass here and there on the grounds is of course true; but that he dwelt and dreamed in this dormitory has been satisfactorily proven. It was the home of the poet. Here he studied and wrote for the better part of a year; here on the bare walls he sketched the charcoal studies that served as decorations; here on the last night of his residence at the University he split a rough deal table to furnish fire-wood. And to this spot as to a shrine came many visitors during the Centenary Celebration.

The room itself is one of the row of dormitories built under Jefferson's direction about eighty-five years ago. It forms part of what is called "West Range," a long line of single cloistral cells, in front of which extends a covered walk or arcade, formed by the over-

hanging roof supported by square brick columns. It looks toward the west, giving a view of the misty reaches of the Blue Ridge, and nearer, toward the south, of the broken, tree-clad Ragged Mountains,—the scene of the poet's solitary rambles and lone communings. Over the door is a simple bronze tablet, the gift of Miss Whiton and Miss Bangs of Washington, D. C., bearing the inscription: *Domus parva magni poetæ.*

Within the single door is a severely bare apartment. The room is about twelve by fourteen feet in dimensions, with a comparatively low ceiling. It contains one window opposite the entrance, and on the right a grate fireplace with a plain wood mantel shelf. On either side of the mantel are recesses a couple of feet deep. What it looked like in the poet's day can only be conjectured, but it was probably much the same as at present; indeed, there is sufficient evidence to uphold the belief that despite the hard use to which university dormitories are subjected, the floor, though patched, is composed in the main of the very boards across which Poe's restless feet paced, and that the mantel is the same before which he brooded during long watches.

For many years the room was used as a dormitory inhabited by a succession of superstitious or hero-loving students. About 1900 and for three years thereafter the room was the office of Professor Richard H. Wilson, of the Department of Romance Languages. In 1906 the University turned the room over to the Raven Society, an honorary society composed of the literati and scholars of the institution. This organization had taken the title of Poe's famous poem for its name, and a silhouette of that solemn bird as its insignia. To do its patron honor, it desired to fit out his old room. In 1907 a committee was appointed, but, owing to financial difficulties, could accomplish nothing. The fall of 1908 a committee composed of L. R. Whipple, chairman; R. M. Jeffress, and J. B. Holmes, was selected by The Ravens from their number to furnish the room.

The society voted money from its own treasury, and sent out an appeal to its alumni members. The latter responded generously, and with the funds secured from these sources, the committee was able to carry out its intention. After the consideration of several

plans it was decided to decorate and furnish the apartment as a student's room in Poe's time. The place had fallen into a state of serious disrepair. With the assistance of the University and Dr. W. A. Lambeth, the necessary changes were made. Two unsightly closets were removed, the floor was strengthened, the mantel adjusted, the walls plastered and tinted, and the paint renovated.

Then with the co-operation of the Biggs Antique Company of Richmond, Virginia, and a firm of decorators in St. Louis, Missouri, the furnishing was partly completed. The furniture is all solid mahogany, of the period of 1830, and most of the pieces are genuine antiques. Of particular interest is a heavy settee which at one time was in the Allan home in Richmond. The table, chairs and hangings conform to this style. The room has been suitably marked, and partly furnished, and with the contributions that will doubtless come with the years, will finally contain worthy memorials to the poet's fame.

VIII

IN THE MINDS OF MEN

DR. Alois Brandl, University of Berlin :

It is not so easy to give a true estimate of Poe's mission. He was a man of the imagination, and he did a great deal towards rousing the imagination of New Englanders. He was a literary pioneer. It meant a great deal in his day to build a poetical hunting lodge; the temples of literature had to follow. I am not acquainted enough with America to feel the specifically American elements in him; he is rather a Coleridge, separated from his English surroundings and transplanted on Massachusetts soil; a Coleridge without a Wordsworth at his side, without a Napoleon to fight with, but in a colonial country, vast and peaceful and still in the making. A German will always feel reminded of E. T. A. Hoffman, for, like him, Poe was one of the few inventors that Teutonic literature can boast of, while

the fabulistic faculty is more frequent among Romance people. Altogether it has been a good idea of the University of Virginia to celebrate the birthday of an author who is known to the educated of all nations as one of the most fascinating "makers" of America.

President Paul B. Barringer, Virginia Polytechnic Institute:

I have always been an admirer of Poe, not only as our greatest literary genius, but as a "good, safe, household poet." Poe is one of the few writers of that day and time whose every line is so clean and free from taint that it can be put into the hands of one's twelve-year-old daughter.

If those critics who always insist on judging Poe's work by the side light of morality would take the internal evidences of moral cleanliness found in his work itself, rather than the uncertain evidences of loss of stamina which come to us through manifestly biased tradition, their task would be simpler. When a man's natural inclination towards literary cleanliness is so strong that it cannot be undone by a life of misfortune, poverty, and

physical suffering, he should at least be given credit for his better instincts.

Dr. Sidney E. Bradshaw, Furman University:

In spite of the efforts of all the critics to "place" him in American literature, Edgar Allan Poe continues to be read, admired, and discussed for the marvelous qualities of his verse and prose. There is none like him, and whether we agree with one critical judgment or another, his work will endure as long as the English language is known and read.

Professor St. James Cummings, South Carolina Military Academy:

I should like to see you presiding in such a high ceremony of enlarging the realm of Poe. And indeed, I should be greatly pleased, to vitalize our relations face to face. As you may easily guess, I am a devoted hanger-on of Poe: and by that I mean that I am one of those who maintain a breathless and eager attitude of suspense and devotion toward the yet unrevealed fulness of grace of our poet's soul. I hope any day for the oracle to speak with finality, and declare the true estate of him

whose bright spirit has been beating its way through darkness for a season. In my Hopkins days I was allowed to feel the *living influence* of Lanier, who had already left our planet. Here in Charleston I have learned to know the living influence of Timrod, long since departed. I still look for a day—and it may be to-morrow—when the Poe beyond disclaimer will be disclosed alive and triumphant—an avatar for those who have the faith to wait. More than any one else, Poe represents the South. Rich and poor, shining and dim, passionate in soul yet calling for rights on the dictates of cold reason, the poet, the people and the province still retain a mystery virginal and elusive, but are undeniably endowed with resources, with a proper genius, deep and abiding. The Poe world will some time be no figure of speech, but will enjoy a day and a night of its own, where the greater and the lesser light may beat in splendor against the darkness; and the God of harmony will call it good. Hail to the day! Your centenary celebration cannot fail to awaken for a finer rendition the magic music beyond words that he has left in our keeping.

Dr. Charles W. Dabney, University of Cincinnati:

The reference to No. 13, West Range, reminds me that, upon entering the University of Virginia, I was first assigned to that room and lived in it for about a month. It was a dark, dismal room with a window looking out on the backyard, which was in those days filled with rubbish, tin cans, etc., thrown out from the kitchens of the dining hall, and I was very happy to get as soon as possible a better room over in one of the Dawson-Row houses. The event did not fail, however, to make a great impression upon me, and I remember distinctly the traditions I picked up at the time. Among others, Mr. Wertenbaker told me his usual story about Poe and showed me the registration book where he signed his name.

Mr. Hamlin Garland, Chicago:

I have been a lover of Poe's verse since my earliest boyhood and have read almost every book and nearly every article about him, except some of the very recent ones, and his wonderful power over the imaginations of

men is still a kind of unaccountable wizardry—I mean that the quality that resides in his verse and in his best prose is like the magic that rises from a strain of really original music. His wizardry does not vanish with the years—at least in my case. To this day, “The Raven” has power to thrill me. Worn, hackneyed, if the critic pleases, there is still *something* in this poem and in “The City in the Sea” and other of Poe’s best verse which defies the years.

Mr. Thomas Hardy, Max Gate, Dorchester,
England:

‘The University of Virginia does well to commemorate the birthday of this poet. Now that the lapse of time has reduced the insignificant and petty details of his life to their true proportion beside the measure of his poetry, and softened the horror of the correct classes at his lack of respectability, that fantastic and romantic genius shows himself in all his rarity. His qualities, which would have been extraordinary anywhere, are altogether extraordinary for the America of his date. Why one who was in many ways dis-

advantageously circumstanced for the development of the art of poetry should have been the first to realize to the full the possibilities of the English language in rhyme and alliteration is not easily explicable. It is a matter of curious conjecture whether his achievements in verse would have been the same if the five years of childhood spent in England had been extended to adult life. That "unmerciful disaster" hindered those achievements from being carried further, must be an endless regret to lovers of poetry.

Mr. Maurice Hewlett, Old Rectory, Broad Chalke, England:

Nothing that I could say could add to Edgar Poe's fame. So far as Europe is concerned he is secure of his immortality. I believe myself that he will live as a poet rather than as a prose writer; but that he will be remembered as a genius, a creature apart, one of those rare beings whose power constitutes a privilege, I have no doubt whatever. I rank him, in the quality of his gift, with our John Keats.

Mr. Robert Underwood Johnson, New York:

Whatever may be said of Poe—and hardly any writer has been so praised and so criticised—his service to letters has been immense. It seems to me that the chief bases of his fame are his original type of imagination, which awakens and challenges that faculty in his reader; his intense intellectuality, and the opulence of his rhythmic resources. If his work does not have the close touch with real life which is an essential of great writing, he has created a realm of his own, in which he detains us by a sort of mesmeric power, till we find ourselves “moving about in worlds not realized.” If his voice has not the diapason of Emerson,—if it is not the *vox humana* of our more philanthropic day; if his theory of beauty in literary composition leaves out of account the beauty of conduct, nevertheless, he has been for fifty years, and still remains, an important and vital influence in poetry, fiction and criticism. His name was long ago indelibly inscribed in the world’s Hall of Fame.

Professor Thomas C. McCorvey, University of Alabama:

* * * The greatest of American poets—one of the greatest, in my judgment, of the English speaking race. "Time at last sets all things even," and Poe's *alma mater* is to be congratulated upon the fact that tardy justice has slowly but surely determined his rightful place in the world of letters as a genius of the very highest order. The University of Alabama has a special interest in Poe's centenary from the fact that one of the first professors in this institution, the late Henry Tutwiler, was a fellow student of the poet at the University of Virginia. While the earnest, diligent student—intent upon appropriating during his college course as much as possible of the world's learning—had little in common with the erratic child of genius, whose imagination was even then perhaps "dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before," still Dr. Tutwiler cherished, throughout his long life, a lively recollection of the youthful escapades of the poet while they were college mates at Charlottesville.

Dr. Edwin Mims, Trinity College, N. C.:

The University has every reason to be proud of Poe's relation to it. I am sure that he was more influenced by the atmosphere of the University than many people have thought. It is very significant that a Southern University should place such emphasis upon literary work as you do in this celebration. It ought to serve to call renewed attention to the importance of high art in the lives of our people.

Dr. Frederick Duglison Power, Garfield Memorial Church, Washington, D. C.:

I have always felt America's two greatest poems were Poe's "Raven" and Bryant's "Waterfowl." Starkweather's word is a good one: "To use a geographical metaphor, Poe's life was bounded on the north by sorrow, on the east by poverty, on the south by aspiration, and on the west by calumny. His genius was unbounded. His soul was music, and his very lifeblood was purest art." Had Poe humor and human sympathy he would be our greatest literary genius.

Professor Walter Raleigh, University of Oxford:

I have the profoundest admiration for Poe; and his influence on European literature has been enormous. So I hope I may say what I feel, that we are stifling ourselves with literary anniversaries. I begin to think that English literature is dead, and to wish that I was not a professor of it, when I see all this monumental stone-mason work engrossing the time and attention of literary men year after year. Have they nothing worth saying for itself that they must search in the calendar and speak when the clock strikes? We have Johnson, Tennyson, Mrs. Browning, on hand in England—new season's goods for the window to get the reluctant public drawn in. It is all very illiterate. But if ever a centenary was warranted, yours is,—in Virginia, and to commemorate a poet who was barely recognised while he lived. Pious deeds are good; and I should love to see Virginia in its daily life; though I prefer to honor Poe by reading him.

Professor Franklin L. Riley, University of
Mississippi:

On the occasion of my visit to the University last summer I found no place on your campus more interesting than room No. 13, West Range. I am delighted to learn that, by making this a "Poe Museum," it will become a more attractive literary shrine. It is especially gratifying to know that the great University of Virginia, the *alma mater* of men of letters as well as statesmen, will commemorate in a fitting manner the literary services of perhaps the most talented, certainly one of the most original, authors connected with its history.

Dr. William James Rolfe, Cambridge, Mass.:

I have known and loved the poet from my first acquaintance with him in my college days, sixty years ago. The pocket edition of his poems published by Middleton (New York) in 1863, has often been a favorite companion of mine in travel by sea and on land; and, though I have the recent 1903 edition of his complete works in five volumes,

I still feel a particular love for that little book, so frequently read and reread, and associated with so many delightful memories. "Annabel Lee" became fixed in my memory when it was first printed in 1849, and I can never forget how its tender *music* and sentiment first moved me.

Professor George Saintsbury, University of
Edinburgh:

Thirty-three years ago, when I was endeavoring to make some opening in literature, I horrified and almost enraged a magazine editor of great note by sending him an essay tending to show that Poe, with all his faults, was "of the first order of poets." I am of the same opinion to-day.

Professor Erich Schmidt, University of
Berlin:

Von Edgar Allan Poe hab' ich schon in jungen Jahren starke Eindrücke empfangen und bewundere in seinen Werken die seltene Vereinigung der kühnsten Phantasie mit dem schärfsten Verstand.

Miss Molly Elliot Seawell, Washington, D. C. :

As time passes, the conviction grows that Poe had the fire divine, and the mere survival of his scanty and incomplete work shows it to be of the first quality. It seems a sort of reparation for his melancholy and unfortunate life that the world which once used him very ill should now be eager to do him honor.

Dr. Wilhelm Viëtor, University of Marburg :

Ist es mir auch nicht möglich, unsere Universität an Ihrem Festtage persönlich zu vertreten, so gereicht es mir doch zur hohen Ehre, als Marburger Professor der Englischen Philologie, unsere schriftlichen Glückwünsche senden zu dürfen. Ich werde des Tages in meiner Vorlesung oder in der Sitzung des Englischen Seminars gebührend gedenken und so den Marburger Studenten der Englischen Philologie ins Gedächtnis rufen, was die gebildete Welt dem Genius des Dichters der "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque" und des "Raven" schuldet.

Dr. George Armstrong Wauchope:

South Carolina, where Poe once resided and the scene of "The Gold-Bug," gladly joins hands with his *alma mater* in honoring his memory. In doing so, we believe that we are not only ratifying an act of public justice, but honoring this University and the South, which gave his radiant name to the nation.

We can never discharge the unpaid debt which the whole country owes to Poe for *our æsthetic declaration of independence*, for he was our prophet of beauty who led us willy-nilly out of the wilderness of philistinism, puritanism, and provincialism. The chief causes of the failure in America to recognize earlier the great worth of Poe, have been, in my opinion, the challenge of his strange and abnormal personality, the hostility aroused by him as our first searching and authoritative critic, the challenge to the literary pharisees of the North of his æsthetic literary creed, and closely, though perhaps unconsciously, associated with the foregoing causes, a certain vague though deep-seated sectional prejudice. Happily such hindrances

to a just appreciation are but local and temporary, and will soon, I believe, actually accelerate the crowning and apotheosis of Poe. Meanwhile, foreign criticism has hailed him thrice-laureled victor in his chosen lists—criticism, song, and story—and his fame is safely enshrined in the Pantheon of Southern hearts.

Professor Dr. Georg Witkowski, University
of Leipsic:

Der Universität von Virginien spreche ich zur Feier von Edgar Allan Poe's hundertstem Geburtstag meinen Glückwunsch aus. An der Feier, die einem der Groszen im Reiche eigenartiger Phantasiebegabung, einem Erschlieszer ungekannter Tiefen des Seelenlebens, einem Dichter von seltenem Formtalent, einem Meister unter den Erzählern aller Völker und Zeiten, einem der stärksten Anreger neuer Kunst gilt, nehme ich im Geiste Teil, und würde ihr gern persönlich beiwohnen, wenn es mir möglich wäre.

Professor Richard Wülker, University of
Leipsic:

Ich danke vielmals für diese Ehrung, und wäre gerne dazu erschienen, um so mehr als ich Poe als Dichter für origineller und damit bedeutender als Longfellow betrachte, und damit für den ersten Dichter Nord-Amerikas erklären möchte.

Mr. William B. Yeats, of Ireland:

I wish very much it were possible for me to join with you in doing honor to the memory of one who is so certainly the greatest of American poets, and always and for all lands a great lyric poet. But the Atlantic is very wide, and therefore I can only send my thoughts and my good wishes to you in Virginia.

Mr. Israel Zangwill, London:

I thank the University of Virginia for the honor of its invitation, and regret that time and space oppose themselves to my desires to pay honor to the memory of so great a creative artist as Edgar Allan Poe. In verse

he created new poems and new rhythms, in criticism he created new methods of analysis, in prose he created the romance of horror, of treasure-adventure, and of criminal mystery. He is one of the few masters of the short story, and the true father of Sherlock Holmes. While nobody has been able to imitate his poetry, his prose has created a school in France, in Germany, and in England, to say nothing of literatures less known to me. The University of Virginia may well celebrate the birthday of the adopted Virginian who ranks as the most original of the authors of America.

GREETINGS

Dr. Charles W. Kent, chairman of the committee in charge of these exercises, sent greetings to other assemblages met to honor Poe:

Mr. Albert E. Davis, the Poe Cottage at Fordham:

We gather in his University room and you in his ill-starred cottage to honor the genius that has made each domicile a Mecca.

Dr. Ira Remsen, Johns Hopkins University:

The University of Virginia, mindful of Baltimore's guardianship of Poe's ashes and your University's loyalty to the Southland's poets, congratulates city and University alike on the tribute they pay to his genius.

Authors' Club, London:

The University of Virginia has pride in your recognition of her son.

Dr. George A. Wauchope, University of South Carolina:

The University of Virginia congratulates

the University of South Carolina on its celebration of the Poe Centenary. May the land that created heroes never forget them!

Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, Columbia University:

Jefferson's University hails Hamilton's in their common recognition of Poe's genius, and yields her State's right in him to the world-wide federation of letters.

Chancellor Henry M. McCracken, New York University:

The University of Virginia greets New York University with the hope that the Hall of Fame may some day be as hospitable to genius as is your University to-day.

To this the Chancellor responded: New York University reciprocates the greeting of the University of Virginia, and will gladly fellowship with her in communicating to the one hundred electors of the Hall of Fame, representing all the forty-five states of our Union, important facts and enduring sentiments respecting famous Americans.

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